Stories of Life, Love and Adventure

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The
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Powerful Novel
the North
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SAMUEL
ALEXANDER
WHITE

ert V. Carr
mas Addison
ur D.
Howden Smith
lan Dunn
H. Hurst
Townend
hen Allen
Reynolds
and Others

Two Pulse-Quickening Novelettes

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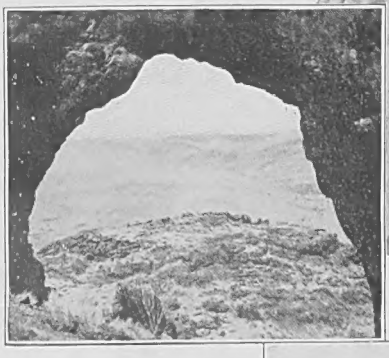
A Few Adventure Photographs

Jag-Mohun, the snake-charmer of India, shown below, sold Gordon McCreagh a cobra, gravely telling his old customer that its fangs had been cut out. "I teased that snake and played the 'death-game' (drawing and dodging a strike with the hand) with him for two weeks before I discovered he had fangs big enough to kill a horse. I operated right there, on the veranda floor." The cobra was brought to this country by Mr. McCreagh and is now in the Bronx Zoo, New York.

Above, Lewis R. Freeman, and some of his caravan leaving Bagdad for Aleppo on a trip from Persian Gulf to Mediterranean. They had several skirmishes with Shamar Arabs (time of Turco-Italian War); a Turkish official killed by nomads; a young Frenchman captured by Kurds, robbed, stripped, and left on the desert, picked up later a raving maniac, but recovering in the American hospital at Beirut.

The photograph above was taken by C. E. McBride about May 15, 1913, in the bush near Mile 98, Canada, in the hope that it might lead to the identification of the lone white man whom he found dead on the trail and buried there—evidently a victim of exposure or starvation. The man's name, however, was never ascertained, and his identity and the circumstances of his death will probably remain one of the mysteries of the Northland.



In 1883 two men found rich placer gold near a natural arch in the Turtle Mts., California. One died of thirst; the other couldn't locate the place. A German, seventeen years later, found the "Lost Arch," but was killed shortly afterward. September, 1912, *Adventure*, printed above data and search was renewed. Charles Battye found an arch, 35 ft. wide, 25 ft. high, shown in the picture, but no sign of gold.

Picture by Victor Hope, one of our world-wanderers, of approach to Fort Principe, Federal Prison, Havana. Many a man who ascended these stairs was never again seen alive.

Port Simpson, typical Hudson's Bay Company post, said to be the oldest on the Pacific coast. Photographed, 1910, by Frank Houghton. He and a friend were the first white men to make the 150-mile trip by sea in a canoe—a 16-footer—from Prince Rupert, B. C., to Portland City, Alaska. All the old-timers told them the trip could not be made by canoe, and that they would be drowned.

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ADVENTURE

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Adventure
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JAN. 1916 Vol. 11 No. 3

The Spoilsman
A Complete Novel

by Samuel Alexander White

Author of "The Posts of Pillage," "The Making of Louis Lavergne," etc.

CHAPTER I

A TOAST TO THE LOST

IT WAS the two hundred Nascaupees of the Nascaupee camp about Fort Chimo who first glimpsed the wraith-like figure lurching out of the hill fringe of stunted forest to the Koksoak's desolate shore. At evening it came through the eerie Northland dusk, through wind and fog and weeping of Labrador rain, blundering all a-stagger so that to the Indians, drawn up apprehensively upon the outskirts of their tepees, it seemed to flit spirit-like from rock to rock.

Their camp-fires constituted the magnet which drew it, but the dizzy impetuosity of its advance was more than the majority of the owners of the camp-fires could stoically endure. With squeals of terror some of these dived for the tepee-flaps. The rest held their ground, albeit with shivers and awesome speculations.

"It is Torngak," some quaked. "It is the Eskimos' god going forth through the dark to destroy."

"No, it is not Torngak," others contradicted. "For Torngak comes not so far from Ungava Bay. It is surely Nenaubosho, the Cree Evil One. He riots forth after the kill of the caribou, for he has not been appeased."

But Chakoni, wisest of the Nascaupees and the trusted fort-runner of Ivan Trevor, lord of Chimo, shouldered scornfully to the front of the quivering ranks.

"You fools!" he stormed. "It is no spirit. It is a man, a lost man, and the hunger helplessness is in his legs. There, he falls and rises not. Yet you know all gods have wings."

He was running swiftly forward as he spoke, and after him, emboldened by his words, pelted the rest of the Nascaupees.

"Yes," they chattered in high-pitched tones, "all gods have wings. Yet he rises not. Chakoni speaks true. It is a man."

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The man lay face down upon the barren rocks, drenched by the rain and splashed by the river waves. So deep was the gloom of night and storm that the Nascaupees could make out but little of his form or features, still they knew his clothes, ripped to ribbons though they were, as the clothes of a woodsman.

"A white!" spoke Chakoni. "And therefore of note in this country! Let us get him to the factor with all speed."

Many hands laid hold and raised the prostrate body as easily as a rag.

"Light as a raven's feather!" ejaculated Chakoni, astonished in spite of his superior wisdom. "He has starved longer than I thought. Quick, my brothers! To the factor, lest he die in our hands!"

Rapidly they bore him through the darkness along the foam-lathered bank of the Koksoak River. Gloom was behind them, gloom before, and the smatter of lights now hidden by the sweeping fog pall, now blinking into view as the cloud bank passed, was the only thing to guide their feet. Dimmest of these gleams their tepee fires glowed in the rear. To their left on the Koksoak's breast swayed the riding-lights of the Hudson's Bay Company's ship which had arrived some days before and whose yearly visit the whole tribe had come down from the Barren Grounds to see. While ahead, bigger beacons in the obscurity, shone the mellow window-flares of the Post which was their goal.

Up the lane of palings from the river landing Chakoni and his brethren carried their burden till they came to the factor's step. Releasing one hand, Chakoni knocked on the door.

There was a wait while they breathed thrice. Then the door opened, and Ayume, the girl who kept the factor's household, and the belle of Chakoni's tribe, appeared in the opening. She was short, after the stature of all Nascaupee women, and likewise straight-mouthed, flat-nosed and wooden-featured, but these attributes of physiognomy did not strike the eye as at all repulsive. In her old age Ayume would undoubtedly grow ugly. But just now she was in the flower of her prime, ripe-bodied, luscious-limbed and so full-featured that the flatness of her face was relieved by an abundance of flesh and her cheeks took on a pleasing contour. Moreover, the dark magic of witchery haunted her unfathomable smile, and in her strangely set eyes lurked the dreaming and the wisdom of a Buddha.

According to Northern standards of beauty she was the most attractive girl of the Nascaupees. Hers was a position of honor in the factor's house; and what with her beauty and station she was accustomed to queen it over the Barren Grounds tribe when it arrived at the Post each Autumn to trade in fur, making of its male members so many ardent admirers, yet all the while laughing off the advances of this her own breed and holding in her heart the vision of a white man for a mate.

Chakoni was one of those who aspired to grace a tepee with her presence, and about Chakoni Ayume was not so sure. His was a wisdom which approached and at times even transcended the white man's, and he, too, was the trusted of Ivan Trevor. Nevertheless she was careful not to let Chakoni probe her secret mind, and over him she queened it just a little more peremptorily than over the others.

"WELL, what do you want, you beggars at a banquet?" she demanded sharply in the Nascaupee tongue. "Chakoni, do you not know that the Company's ship is come and that the factor feasts its officers? Go you back to your tepees. He likes not interruption at his meals."

"It is a white man, Ayume," announced Chakoni, passively sponging away the rain from his face. "We found him on the shore, and we brought him lest he die with us, so you will tell——"

"A white man!" interrupted Ayume in an excited screech. "Then bring him, Chakoni, quickly. The factor should be told. True, he must always be told ere any one enters, yet this time I will dare, lest the white man die as you say."

With the lithe spring of a deer Ayume bounded across the factor's council-room with its cavernous fireplace, its heavy, carved chairs, its long table littered with maps and papers and opened the door of the adjoining room.

Chakoni and the others, crowding on her heels, saw through that doorway the banquet table spread with china and silver and linen and a feast of the food of the North. At its head bulked the factor, on his feet for the toasts, with Captain Cairne, Surgeon

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Ballard and the rest of the Company ship's officers ranged around.

At the interruption Ivan Trevor turned, port glass still in hand. He was a huge man, huge both of girth and height, strong in the strength of his youth, black of hair and fierce-blue of eye.

"Ayume," he reprimanded in a voice that boomed, "will you neffer be getting any sense in that wooden head of yours? You know my mandates and my rules. You know you should be in the kitchen serving and tiptoeing to whisper in my ear if anybody knocks. Yet here you are leading a rabble in upon us unannounced. What the teffle do you mean?"

"Um white man!" whimpered Ayume, descending into broken English and cringing under the blaze of his eyes. "Chakoni and um tribe found um on um beach."

"A white man!" echoed Ivan contemptuously. "Now, Ayume, what dream will you be dreaming next? Save myself, Sachelle, my chief trader, Eduldund of the George River Post and those of the Company's ship, there is not a white man within hundreds of miles of Fort Chimo."

"Nevertheless, he is white," ventured Chakoni, pushing in with his burden. "Look, factor, and you will see."

The Nascaupees raised the body in their hands into the light, and the men about the banquet-table exclaimed in a chorus of horror. The condition of the man, which the gloom of night had hidden, now flaunted hideously in the candle-light. His feet, which protruded from the Nascaupee group were encased in trail-made caribou-skin moccasins, soaked to pulp with the wet and worn through in a dozen places.

From ankles to knees his legs were bare, as if his woodsman's trousers had been stagged off for wading, and above the legs the remainder of his body was little better covered. Trousers and shirt, dirt-plastered, sodden with rain and rent and frayed, were held together here and there with sharp, spiny twigs and loops of discolored twine. He had no hat, and the head the Nascaupees shifted up as they moved him along bobbed grotesque as the head of a gorilla.

"God preserve's!" breathed Ivan, aghast. "Will you be looking at himt here! A caveman, wild with hair and beard and bronze! And it is the wilderness and starvation that has done it. That I know. Given civilization, bath and bleach, he would be blooming fair as any. 'Fore Heffen, gentlemen, there's a trip behind yon legs. Aye, and a tale on yon tongue if we can get it off. Quick, Chakoni, you will be putting him on the table. Neffer mind the linen. A man's life is a man's life, and linen will wash or burn. There, Ballard, feel his heart! Ayume, bring the brandy from the shelf! If I mistake not the strength of yon gaunt frame, it is but collapse."

"It is collapse," corroborated Surgeon Ballard, snatching the brandy from Ayume and administering it, "complete collapse. But it is so complete that I am afraid there is delirium behind it. Ha! You are right about the strength of his frame. He stirs already!"

The man's head rolled from side to side. His eyes opened, wide, glaring, full of shifting surface gleams, fierce as the eyes of an animal or of the caveman he unconsciously emulated. They encountered those of Ivan Trevor staring at him over Surgeon Ballard's shoulder, and the sudden intensity of his glance showed that he was struggling for speech seconds before he forced his lips to move.

"Softly, man, softly," cautioned Ivan kindly. "You will be taking it easy at first. Only your name, this time, and where you hail from! Are you remembering it—your name?"

The man half rose at the hips from his prone position on the table.

"Seton Channing!" he answered with a spasmodic gape of his white-toothed mouth.

"And you will be from?"

"Quebec!"

The word was but a gasp, and the man fell back with a crash among the china and the silver.

"Delirium, as I feared!" diagnosed Surgeon Ballard, holding the jerking limbs and lowering an ear to the incoherent babble which gurgled out between the clicking teeth. "We must put him to bed, Trevor, give him a sustaining broth and, if possible, get some one, man or woman, to nurse him constantly."

"Aye, delirium," murmured Ivan. "That word 'Quebec' is the height of delirium. He has neffer done it. It is that he imagines it. But there is my bed. Chakoni, take him upstairs. And there is Ayume to nurse. None better than she, what with her herbs and brews and black witch-magic. Take

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her, Ballard, and follow Chakoni. I will be going up also as soon as I have dismissed my guests."

Ivan motioned the surgeon up the stairs, motioned the rest of the Nascaupees from the room and again raised his untouched glass of port.

As at a signal Captain Cairne and the others took up theirs.

Ivan ran a swift glance 'round the table sides to assure himself that all were in readiness and then stared long at the soiled spot on the linen at the farther end, at a broken china cup and at a bent silver fork.

"I am not fathoming it at all," he mused perplexedly. "It cannot be that he has come from Quebec, eight hundred miles away, across an uncrossed wilderness. And since Eraldson Post was closed, there has not been a white man nearer here than the Hudson's Bay Post at Nichikun Lake, and even that is two hundred miles to the south. Neffer a white man, I am stating, for you will remember I caught the United Fur Company's trespassers from Montreal before effer they got across the Height of Land and turned them south again with the threat of my judgment upon them if they trespassed in Hudson's Bay country a second time.

"No, there is no fathoming it at all. But syne we will be knowing. Aye, when he wakes we will be knowing. Meanwhile let us drink our last toast. Only I would be asking your permission to change that last toast. To the Venturesome it was. Now let it be to the Lost. To the Lost, gentlemen, to his succor and his secret!"

CHAPTER II

THE FAR-FARERS

UPON the fifth morning after the Post banquet Ivan Trevor and Surgeon Ballard were smoking together in the council room, Ballard a Manila cigar and Ivan a monstrous pipe half a yard in length which like his well-thumbed Bible was his constant solace in the lonely Northern life, when Ayume rushed downstairs to them in a fluster.

"Um remembers! Um remembers!" she chattered. "Um want to speak with you."

"Fair grand!" ejaculated Ivan, rising quickly. "We will be going up, surgeon, to see this patient who takes you unawares. You were not expecting him to grow rational so soon, eh?"

"Not till afternoon," confessed the surgeon. "That kind of delirium generally runs at least four days. It is his strength that has cut the period. A powerful man, Trevor! In condition, I should judge almost as powerful as you. And, getting back of medicine and therapeutics and down to the essence of cure, you know yourself it is stamina that works the miracle."

"Aye, that I do. And also I know that the man who dares the North in any fashion needs the stamina of a bull walrus."

Ivan mounted the stairs in the lead, the smoke of his great pipe spraying over his shoulder in a cloud, and crossed the bedroom floor. In the bed in the corner of the room, propped up against pillows, sat the man called Seton Channing. Yet he was not the same-appearing man as on the night he staggered into Chimo.

His long hair was shorn, his beard trimmed, the blood and dirt cleansed from his person, and though the bronze of exposure still tinged his face to a swarthy hue, the skin of his breast where his robe lay open shone white as a woman's. His eyes still gleamed wide and fierce, but the cutting of his hair had robbed them of the cave man look.

Ivan Trevor saw them as only the stern eyes of a strong man, grim and tenacious in endeavor, relentless in conflict with a foe. Quick to read men in a land where it was his business to master and to direct men, the factor conceived this Channing as an adamant character, forceful in his own ends and purposes even to the verge of madness. And he liked him for that iron of the system which was apparent through his weakness, and he held forth his huge hand in recognition of it.

"Sir, I am congratulating you," he greeted. "It is not many men who would sit as you sit after what you have endured."

"And to you," smiled Channing, returning the hand-grip firmly, "I am apologizing. Not mentioning the matter of cluttering you up with the responsibility of my life, here I have been stealing your bed for four nights, so Ayume tells me."

"Ayume!" ejaculated Ivan, wrinkling his forehead with a quizzical look first at the man and then at the Buddha-eyed girl.

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"So you are knowing your nurse's name—so soon?"

"Of course! Hasn't she a tongue, and English, such as it is? She has told me the manner of my coming four nights ago and what followed since. For that I apologize and for misleading you about my starting-point. It was not Quebec."

"Man, I knew it," laughed Ivan. "Was I not saying so from the first, Surgeon?"

"Indeed, yes," nodded Ballard, professional eyes upon Channing. "We took it for hallucination, you see."

"Well, I would hardly call it that, though my voicing of it was no doubt the result of an upset brain. I am an explorer of the North—you perhaps have heard of me—and the Quebec to Chimo overland traverse has always been a dream to me. In the moment of irrationality I suppose I became obsessed with the idea that I had completed it, and when you asked where I came from I answered 'Quebec.' But it was not Quebec. It was Rigolet."

"You say so?" Ivan shoved out his hand to shake a second time. "Then I am congratulating you anew. A perilous path, man, and a proud foot that passes safely over it. Were you journeying alone?"

"No, I traveled with a fairly large party up as far as Rigolet. There I left the majority of them, including my wife——"

"Left um wife?" screeched Ayume violently.

"Yes," answered Channing, "at Rigolet. Why? What's the matter?"

But Ayume with a dark surge of blood through her coppery face and a conflagration in her strangely set eyes rushed blindly out of the room.

"What's the matter?" Channing repeated, gazing whimsically after her. "What ails her?"

"Man," explained Ivan, "her pride is grieved. You will be remembering that these Northern girls are very susceptible. To them a white man is something of a god, and Ayume has effer dreamed a wild dream of a fair-skinned mate for herself. It is that she has become enamored of you while she nursed, without realizing that you might be married, and the revelation of a wife is a blow. But it is not mattering. There are dozens like her in the tribe. Go on with your tale. Were you coming, then, alone from Rigolet?"

"SIX set out with me up the Inlet, up the Nascaupee River and through Lake Michikamau to the George. Two went into camp at the source of the Whale after we left the George, rather than attempt the unknown country between it and the Kaniapiskau River. The other four came on."

"God preserve's! And where are the four?"

Channing gave a shiver which was almost a shudder.

"Doom was on us from the start," he groaned. "Cabbeau slipped down a gulch before we made the Big Beaver country and broke his neck on the moraine below. Everslune drowned in Kanachakagamau Lake with all the provisions, and Hartig and Telliel starved along with me. We forged up the Kaniapiskau, but theirs was not the strength to stick it out. They dropped below the mouth of the Larch, stark skeletons both of them—no food for I don't know how many days.

"I can see them now as I saw them last, on their backs with their half-bare feet upthrust over a log, their hands feebly plucking things to rise, with the flies swarming above them, the ants crawling in their hair and the greedy hordes of gray mosquitoes already plastered in their hollow eye sockets. High Heaven, it was horrible! And I —I came through to Chimo as you saw."

In swift mental retrospection Ivan swept back over the ground Channing had covered in the grim traverse. He knew every foot of that ground—river, lake, portage, forest, morass and tableland. From Kanachakagamau to Chimo without food! He conceived the eon of agony bracketed by Channing's brief words.

"Man," he breathed, "I am knowing it was pure perdition. There is no other name for it. But the two weaklings who camped! They had plenty of food?"

"They had plenty for their needs at the time. You see they stayed to Winter there because of the lateness of the season. Their intention was to go south from the Whale *via* the George in the Spring. Nor were they weaklings, either, though one was a woman!"

"A white woman?" blurted Ivan in an astounding roar.

"A white woman, indeed," assured Channing. "But don't be like Ayume and go off your head!"

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Ivan cast down his eyes, and a flush crimsoned deeper his habitually ruddy cheeks.

"You are not understanding," he spoke softly, "what a white woman means in this land. They are more precious than ivory and sable. I have neffer cast eyes on half a dozen since I left Glenelg in far away Scotland to take this Post, and the mention of one within a couple of hundred miles of me sets my fibers all a-thrill."

"Your fibers would thrill a lot more if you had sight of her. Landra Clavaire, she is, my niece and a girl to thrill any man. It is a pity you can not see her. But her feet will never hallow ground as far north as Chimo. She turns south in the Spring again with her father. The trip was too arduous to complete, so at Eraldson Post they'll Winter and——"

"Eraldson Post!" gasped Ivan. He stiffened in his chair and then by strange muscular contraction heaved his body upright like a missile from the chair toward the bed. "But Eraldson Post is closed!"

"So we found it," nodded Channing, staring bewildered at the factor's vehemence. "The door closed but on the latch! The Post people gone to the kill of the caribou, we judged, according to their custom. Surely there was no harm or trespass in them taking shelter till the keepers came back? The Hudson's Bay Company is ever hospitable in that way. Do you mean——"

"Man, I mean what I say," yelled Ivan, shaking his pipe by the stem like a baton while a tremor ravaged his voice. "Eraldson Post is closed—abandoned! It was unprofitable and too far isolated to be getting supplies to. It is shut up, taken off the district. The keepers will not come back. That I know. I am Chief Factor of this district, and it was my mandate which closed it. Now are you understanding?"

"Great God!" gritted Channing, in stark realization. "And they with only a month's food! But curse it, Trevor, there must be some mistake. Everything was fresh and in order just as if the keepers had walked out for the few days' kill of the caribou. Besides, it was the season, the first week of August."

"Aye, efferything in order, just as they walked out at my message the last week of July. It would not pay, you see, to be transporting the furnishings and the trappings, and then the same were there, should we effer be thinking of reopening. A month's provisions, you say?"

"A month's, and gone and more than gone!" clicked Channing through a throat that throbbed. "They're starving already, Tember and Landra. It is the Barren Grounds. There is no game after the migration of the caribou. They're sealed in till Spring, and even if they turned east and made Indian House Lake, they would not be any better off. Those Nascaupees always starve there. God help them, Trevor, it was a diabolical mistake trusting the Post and its deceitful condition, but it is a mistake that can be repaired. It's back-trail at once. Give me my clothes, a canoe, a paddler and food!"

Channing slipped from his bed while he entreated. Dizzy after his prostration, he swayed upon his feet, fighting back helplessness by sheer will power, by an agony of effort calling forth his steel spirit to tense his slack muscles.

"My clothes, Trevor!" he beseeched, his bronzed hand battling away the mottled blindness from his reeling eyes. "Curse you, give me my clothes!"

But the factor thrust him bodily back upon the bed.

"Man, you are mad!" he expostulated. "The privation has unhinged your wits. You might stagger to the Koksoak's shore yonder and wilt and die, and would that be bettering the situation for your brother-in-law Tember Clavaire and his daughter Landra? Give you your clothes? I will be giving you a stretcher and a berth on the Company's ship this afternoon to recuperate at Rigolet. She has been here more than a week already, overstaying her time limit that Surgeon Ballard might wait on you. So it is a berth on her I will be giving you.

"As for the back-trail, it is a sound man's traverse, and I will be taking it myself. Surgeon, lay hold of him. Quiet him with a drug if need be, and I will be sending Ayume up. You two must get him ready for the ship. I can not be doing it because I must reeve in the frayed end of the trade. It has to be attended to before the ship sails and I start. And the ship sails and I start within the hour!"

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CHAPTER III

DEBT

A MAD hour was the noon hour of that day at Fort Chimo. Into its frantic sixty minutes was crammed a full twelve hours of trading, bale-carrying and embarking. The word went out by Chakoni to the Nascaupees that he, Sachelle, the chief trader, and the factor were called away on a mission, that the ship was sailing on the stroke of afternoon, and that trade must be wound up in a rush.

Commotion convulsed the camp at the news. The squat, fat Nascaupee women scrambled about in the interior of the deerskin tepees for fur bales which their lords held to the last in a stubborn attempt to extort overvalue. Papooses and stray Fort curs scuttled in the way and were without discrimination heeled through the tepee fires by the exasperated squaws, plumped upon blankets in dark corners and left to wail or yelp out their woes while the search went on. The men waited phlegmatically until the furs were unearthed and tallied, then they shouldered them and stalked up the lane of palings, turned toward the trading-room of the fur house and took their places in line at the door.

True types of the North they stood, straight as spruce-trees, well though slenderly built, sleek-muscled, strong and in general very tall. Six feet and over ran the full-blooded Nascaupees, and the line broken by a shorter head and stockier body betrayed a brother from the South, a Montagnais who owed his more muscular physique to the intermarriage of his forebears with the *coureurs de bois*.

All, like the squaws who did their drudgery, were given to ornamentation in dress, and their costumes flamed with colors. They were capped with vivid brow fillets or fur hoods of wolf-head skins with the eyes and teeth gleaming lifelike. They were jacketed to the knees in caribou skin coats, hair turned inside and the outside leather decorated in weird designs with dyes made from bark or fish roe, while their lower limbs were encased in deerskin moccasins, and leggings of beaded deerskin or crimson cloth reaching to their thighs. They conversed where they waited in a mixture of Cree and Ojibway in the high-pitched, whining tone which was their natural voice and step by step moved up closer to the trading-room door.

Inside the door bartering held sway. Behind the counters Ivan Trevor, aided by Sachelle and the fort-runner Chakoni, was working furiously against the clock. Three at a time the bales of bear, wolf, wolverine, lynx, beaver, otter, fox, mink and marten came across.

Three at a time the Nascaupees took up their debt. Nor did they resort to their habitual trickery to obtain overvalue for their furs. They sensed the factor's dynamic mood. Moreover, they knew him as a fair man, demanding of the other man only fairness, and they were shrewd enough to foresee that if they attempted any subterfuge in this moment the bales would be thrown back in their faces, unsold till another year, and they would go without their debt to exist by grace of the caribou and the charity of their brethren.

So they accepted meekly the just valuation of Ivan and his helpers. Currency did not circulate at Chimo. The medium of trade was a "skin," and a pelt was graded at so many "skins" according to its kind. Thus an Arctic fox was valued at six "skins," a mink at double that figure, while otter, bear and black fox ran as high as twenty-five, fifty and one hundred "skins."

Their tally of "skins" the Nascaupees took back in merchandise and supplies for the Winter hunt. Four "skins" purchased a pound of tea or a pound of tobacco; five "skins" a yard of cloth or a pouch of powder, and so on throughout their list of necessities. Of flour, which is the white man's mainstay in provisions, they took up but little, for the staff of life of the Nascaupees of the Barren Grounds is not bread, but caribou meat.

They assumed their debt in tea, tobacco, sugar, molasses, ammunition, knives and axes, and what credit was left them they squandered in violent-colored cloth, fancy beads, cheap cambric handkerchiefs and other tawdry finery.

And as fast as they traded their furs, they were pressed into service, with pay, to help load the bales upon the Company's ship. The ship's crew and the Fort retainers could not do the work that was to be done in the time that was allowed, and every man of the Tribe was needed to portage from the store to the beach and ferry from the beach to the ship.

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It was a wild, tumultuous, congested scene and a scene dear to the heart of the Northmen who live from year to year for this one brief break in the monotonous life. Below the clanging Post glistened the circle of Nascaupee tepees, spiraled with the smoke of many camp fires and cluttered with excited women and children viewing the labor from idle vantage. Beyond the tepees an army of men, Nascaupee, Montagnais, Eskimo and white, swarmed and maneuvered on the Koksoak's shore, while upon the river surface itself a fleet of ship's boats, Eskimo oomiaks and Nascaupee birch canoes plied in continual ferriage.

All crafts were loaded to the gunwales with the pungent fur bales. From the shore they worked laboriously to the ship riding out on the Koksoak's mile-wide breast. Under her side they hung while the bundles were raised with ropes over the rail, then they raced lightly back to the bank.

Often there were mishaps in the hurry and the turmoil, when an Eskimo skin oomiak was punctured by a carelessly wielded oar, or the egg-shell side of a Nascaupee canoe smashed on a whale boat's bow, but these were only mirthful incidents in the slavish routine, and amid laughter the unfortunates were hauled out, dripping, to fall to work again at once and dry their clothes by animal heat.

Directing it all, driving each man to the limit and doing the work of three men himself, Ivan Trevor loomed huge in the shuffle. Toiling like demons, Sachelle, Chakoni and the rest struggled to emulate him in all his endeavors, but he was here, there and everywhere, swift of foot, great of strength, packing six hundred pounds at a pack, loading a boat in a wink with big ropings of bales grasped in either hand and launching it off with the heave of a walrus. Now, thanks to sixty molten minutes, he had things shaping toward the end. He had cleared the trading-room of furs and seen that the portage to the wharf was complete. The last boats were putting the last bales aboard, and he bade these stand aside for the moment to give Surgeon Ballard and his patient undisturbed passage to the ship.

"A lane, Sachelle!" he cautioned his chief trader. "Make them hold a lane. Jamming of boats and the wiping of oars is all very well for us, but it will not do for a sick man. Have yon hauling on her starboard quarter cease. Here is Channing now."

Out of the factor's house appeared a stretcher borne by two sailors and accompanied on either side by Ayume and Surgeon Ballard. Wrapped up on the stretcher, Channing lay quite still, passive under the influence of a sedative Ballard had administered. His eyes were closed while he was in motion, but at the halt on the shore as a boat was warped into position to receive the stretcher, his lashes opened, and he looked into the face of Ivan bending over him.

"Ah! You, Trevor!" he sighed. "And I see the ship yonder. Is it Rigolet for me?"

"Aye, Rigolet and health for you; and Eraldson Post and I am not knowing what, for me!"

Channing put up a limp hand.

"You are a bold man, Trevor, and a bold man needs no words of praise. But if you make the traverse and look on Landra, you will have full reward. Do you take my meaning? Even to look on her is worth that journey!"

His hand slipped weakly down. He closed his eyes again and lurched slack-muscled to the swaying of the stretcher as it was lowered into the boat. The surgeon paused to shake the factor's hand before he stepped after.

"Swift travel, Trevor!" he wished, looking Ivan squarely in the eye. "Swift travel and safe finding!"

"Aye," nodded Ivan, a thrill beating in his breast, "safe finding, man! It is also my prayer. Good-by to you, Ballard. And Captain Cairne—be giving him farewell for me."

The boat launched clear and plowed steadily through the choppy waves on the Koksoak till it reached the ship.

Those on shore saw the stretcher slowly ascend in slings. The men and the boat bobbed after. The anchor was up before the craft reached the davits, and, riding the middle current, the ship headed down to ocean water twenty-five miles away.

A sadness gripped the watchers. They strained their eyes as if the intensity of their gaze would hold this parting link with the outside world, but the link drew out to a hair, snapped and the vessel faded on the vision.

SHIP-TIME of the year was gone. Solitary the Post lay once more, the farthest habitation in all Labrador, and the lone men on the Koksoak's bleak

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rocks, lone in everything except in numbers, felt the North enfold them again, felt the spirit of the land draw close and fetter them as its lawful lieges. Silent they stood, a void in every heart, yet not a sound upon any lip save Ayume's to give expression to that void.

She alone cried out stridently, fiercely, in the forest wail with which Northland women mourn their lost, her rounded arms upraised after the departing ship, her Buddhistic eyes flaming with a great yearning. Like a statue on the barren granite she poised, lamenting for a living man as squaws lament for one dead, and the Nascaupees with superstitious shivers gazed on her in awe till the factor stepped forward and touched her upon the shoulder.

"Ayume," he commanded sharply, "you will no be acting the fool. I am knowing your vagaries and making allowance, but such display is bad for the discipline of the tribe. You are hearing me? He is white, and his wife awaits him at Rigolet. For why are you casting eyes on him and wailing aloud? You will neffer be seeing him again."

But Ayume turned on him defiantly, spitting out her quick Cree gutturals.

"He comes again," she asserted. "Even as the South wind comes in Spring he comes, and he will rest under my eyes."

"You ronion, I tell you no! There is the wife. And forby he has had his taste of the North, and the medicine is passing bitter. He will not be coming a second time. Go back to the house. And remember you will be holding yourself in all humility while I am gone. There will be none in authority, but you will be responsible just the same. Do your duties according to the code like a sensible girl and put fey notions from your brain. To the house with you, I am saying!"

Ivan's final words boomed out peremptorily. A moment Ayume's dark eyes battled with his blue ones, her untrained will with his trained one, then under the stare of her people, over whom she was accustomed to queen it, she weakened and turned up the lane of palings.

Yet as she walked she looked back over her shoulder, the flash of Buddhistic wisdom strong in her eyes and the witch-power of prophecy incontestably stamped upon her face. Her glance embraced the Nascaupees first, dwelling and brooding upon them, and swept on to the factor.

"Ayume goes," she announced malevolently. "Ayume goes perhaps farther than you think. But still the Lost One comes as the South wind comes in Spring, and the day he comes will be an evil day for Chimo!"

CHAPTER IV

THE AZOIC WASTES

THE customary route to Eraldson Post was by way of the George River Post, up the George River to Indian House Lake and westward to Eraldson Lake, but Ivan Trevor knew that the customary route was useless for his purpose. It would consume too much time.

Speed was essential in this issue. He could not hope to better the isolated situation of Clavaire and his daughter by coming to them in a roundabout way. They would starve where they waited before he got to them, or wander and die upon the Barrens.

He must strike straight to them as the raven flies in the shortest possible time. He felt that in himself, in Sachelle and in Chakoni resided the power, even under punishment, to do it, but the unknown quantity he gambled against was the Winter. It would come as it always came in Labrador, in an hour, and when that hour would fall no man could tell. Only it must be very close. For ship-time of that year had been very late. September was out. October was in.

The Northland Autumn had been exceptionally fine and prodigal in its stay. Birch, alder, and juniper trees held their tinted leafage. The tall, yellow grasses stood unflattened. Through the languorous days wedges of dilatory wildfowl still slanted erratically about, loons still trumpeted from the inland lakes, the namaycush still jumped in the stream. But such nirvanic weather only presaged sudden change, and before that change occurred it was necessary for the factor to get in to Eraldson Lake.

If he once got in, he could trust his getting out. Thence he could reach the George River whose current had sufficient rapidity to defy for a considerable space of time the shackles of the frost, descend that open waterway and return along the coast to Chimo. Or if the George itself were closed, travel could still be managed with dogs.

The point was to strike Eraldson without

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deviation, without delay. Therefore he must dare the untraveled Whale River, and to launch up its waters involved a cross-country portage of a full day or more.

Ivan arranged the manner of the portage. With a twenty-four foot canoe upon his head he led off from Chimo, skirting the hill above the Post and pointing due east through a notch in the granite ridges to the top of the tableland. Behind him came two Labrador husky dogs with packs upon their backs, half of the team they were reluctantly compelled to take to ensure their egress in case frost did trap them before they reached the George.

Chakoni walked next, packing heavy grub sacks with a tump-line. The other two dogs, burdened like the first ones, followed Chakoni, while Sachelle, the rest of the supplies heaped upon his back, slouched in the rear.

From the Fort they packed without respite till they reached a long, straggling lake, the source of the False River, which drains the country between the Koksoak and the Whale, and here Ivan launched the fur canoe. The dogs were lifted aboard, packs and all, by the scruffs of their necks. The supplies were wedged in beside them.

Chakoni took his place in the bow, Sachelle amidships and Ivan in the stern. The paddling coming as delicious rest after the packing, they drove their bow toward the farther shore.

There was not a ripple upon the surface of the lake. A pool of ink it lay, black as ebony, forbidding as Fear, lying pulseless between grotesquely huddled hills. No wildfowl's image was mirrored in it. No loon rose from its depths. A sheet of dead water in a dead land it rotted there, a symbol of desolation and despair.

Its passage was rest to the three, but it was intensely oppressive. They made haste to escape from its sinister influence at a southeast arm and put the screen of the shore hills between. Yet the country beyond was little better. Monotonous as their toil it stretched away, flat, treeless, all waste rock and waste water with waste wind, mournful-voiced and clammy-breathed, wandering over it.

At times the gape of a gulch, the jut of a sand ridge or the cobble of a bouldered moraine broke their path, but these seemed only to emphasize the never-ending flatness of the immense plateau. They halted halfway across at night and fell dispiritedly to the making of camp. Ivan attended to the dogs. Sachelle spread the canvas fly in the shelter of a large rock. Chakoni kindled a fire and began to cook supper. This latter process was not an easy one. The dead, stunted sticks, like withes, which he gathered on the plateau smoked before they would burn and finally burned with a peculiar flame.

"See, they are damp and salted with the salt fog of the sea," he declared. "It has come from the North, and the Arctic wind is on its heels."

"Dat so?" asked Sachelle, staring. "Ba gosh, you be right! It is de salt. I be see dat flame before. Look, factor, an' hear w'at he be say."

Ivan came and gazed, while Chakoni repeated his prophecy.

"I am no saying you are right, Chakoni," he philosophized gravely, "and I am no saying you are wrong. The Arctic wind may be on a fret, but I will neffer be admitting it until it smites me sheer. Go on with the supper. We are famished men."

Quickly Chakoni boiled tea and baked bannocks after the fashion he had learned of white men. These with dried caribou meat constituted their meal, the scraps of which were thrown to the whining, fighting dogs. Fresh fuel was piled upon the coals, and the flame-light drove back the pall-like darkness.

Close to the fire sprawled the men, smoking of the Company's tobacco, Sachelle in a short, black trader's pipe, Chakoni in one of stone made by himself and worn down to exceeding thinness, and Ivan in the tremendous - bowled, long - stemmed oddity which filled all of one pocket in his mackinaw coat. They had sweated on the trail, and despite the fire's heat they chilled as the darkness deepened and the temperature dropped.

"SHE'S growin' colder all de w'ile," grunted Sachelle, shifting his position so as to warm his back. "Chakoni, throw on more dose sticks."

Chakoni added another bundle of withes.

"It is the chill of the Arctic wind," he observed. "It comes after the fog, and there will be no more fog, nothing but the cold, the snow and the blizzard."

"Chakoni," spoke Ivan, "I do not like it, but I am believing you are right. The night

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is fey, and my marrow quakes more than is meet. Aye, I am fearing the North wind comes as you say. And if we had yon ronion of an Ayume here, she could tell us the very hour."

Abruptly the factor relapsed into silence again, drawing thoughtfully on his pipe and staring off into the inky wastes. There was nothing to be seen there, yet he seemed to have the gift of penetrating the unseen and fathoming the low-hanging pall. Perhaps he visioned Eraldson Lake, the lone Post to which he journeyed and the two for whom he dared the Barrens and the frost.

But after the manner of the man he voiced nothing of his visions. From searching the dark he turned to the camp-fire with a sigh and searched its red heart for something that was not there.

For this fire on the outer limits of the Barrens was no ordinary fire such as woodsmen lie by. It burned as on the peak of the world. It lacked the atmosphere of enveloping forest about. It crackled with a ghostly crackle, as if burning in a vacuum, in a void of dreariness and despair, and over and above its subdued tumult the men ever caught themselves listening for a sound in the distance, a sound that did not come.

No woods echo or scurry of woods-folk blended with the fire's whisper, and the effect was uncanny, mysterious, death-like. And as sound suggests movement, the lack of it advertised the lack of movement.

The barren plateau was a vault through which since dark not even an air current eddied. Nothing to be called movement unless it was the palpitation of the stars above and the waving spray of the aurora abruptly blooming like a flower upon the black horizon.

"All the signs," nodded Chakoni, gazing fixedly at the spectral light. "For what is prophecy, whether of mine or Ayume's or any one's, but the wisdom of signs? There was the dead land we came through and the dead water we paddled over. There was the smoky wood and the salt in the fire. There is the night dark and heavy as a blanket. There is the barren earth, empty as a seal's bladder. The stars shake, and in the spirit lights of the Pole there is the flame of red. True, and if we were back in the gut of the Koksoak Valley, we would see that the alder and juniper and birch have dropped their leaves; we would hear the wild duck wedges whistle in the black clouds, stretching their necks to the South. The signs, factor, the signs in all their wisdom. Is it not so?"

"Aye, Chakoni," agreed the factor, tapping the last ashes from his pipe, "no Northman can be gainsaying the signs. Winter comes in the morn, I'll warrant, and we will be needing all our strength to face it. Strength draws from sleep. So to bed, men, and an early start! We will be making the Whale in a crack before it swoops in its might."

Ivan rolled up in his blankets. Sachelle and Chakoni did likewise. In a row the three lay, feet to the coals, under the fly. The banked fire burned away slowly, sending weird shadows flitting across the stretched canvas and the blanketed bodies.

Sleep fell instantly upon the three, and the quartette of huskies, prowling restlessly about on the edge of the camp, seemed to know it. They stole in noiselessly, coiling next the fire at the sleepers' feet, apparently dozing, yet ever opening eyes and sniffing crinkled noses toward the North. Their animal intelligence also sensed a change of season.

Even more than their human masters were they stirred, perplexed, rendered uneasy by the intangible menace that hovered in the far dark. Ever their eyes came up gleaming above the fire, and one by one, between fitful dozing, they watched the stars die out after midnight and the flower of the aurora wither and fade.

Supergloom and supersilence enfolded the world. It was creeping on to four o'clock in the morning when the dogs suddenly sprang erect. Four barbaric, wolfish silhouettes they stood, stiff-legged, stiff-maned against the feeble flame, ears pricked out and queer, gurgling whines rumbling in their throats. A moment they defied the unseen menace, then in a panic the quartette scurried over the factor's prostrate body and hid at his head by the base of the fly.

Quick as Ivan was to wake, the fly was flat upon him when he woke, upset not by the dogs' touch, but by the wind's. The canvas was flapping wildly. The brands of the fire were glowing streaks blown twenty feet in the air. Snow was seething horizontally through the camp space in a white torrent, and the northerly gale that drove it bore the bitter cold of the Arctic icefields.

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Ivan put out a hand, partly to reassure the whimpering dogs, partly to make certain that they were all there, for now they took on worth far greater than piles of ivory and bales of furs, while with his other hand he opened the dial of his watch and felt the hands.

"Sachelle! Chakoni!" he yelled, kicking awake the two who, worn with toil and unaware of anything save their delicious dreams, were still snoring blissfully beneath the clinging canvas. "Get up; get up for the trail. It is four o'clock and the elements making for a tefflish rampage!"

"But, factor," protested Sachelle, as he and Chakoni rolled dazedly out, "we'll be smash de canoe, smash de outfit, smash everyt'ing if we be move in dis wind."

"We will smash if we stay," Ivan told him. "And, man, are you calling this wind?"

"*Mon Dieu!* W'at else?"

"Man," ridiculed Ivan, whirling the canoe upon his shoulders and settling it stiffly there with his giant strength in spite of the sweep of the blast, "this is but the first caress of zephyrs. We must get off the Barrens and into the shelter of the Whale River timber before real wind starts to blow. Throw the packs on the dogs, slip the tump-lines on yourselves, and follow me!"

CHAPTER V

ERALDSON POST

IN A WHIRLING blizzard that racked them to exhaustion under their burdens they struck the dip of the Whale Valley at midday. The Whale, unlike many other rivers of the land, was well wooded with a fringe of considerable width along either shore, and into the cover of the crowded spruce and larch trees they plunged from the whip of the wind.

Once into the greenwoods growth, they halted for rest, lit a fire and gulped breakfast and dinner in one meal. Then they threaded the snow-choked spruce aisles to the steep of the river's bank, where the river suddenly burst upon them as an appalling sight.

From shore to far shore it was full of pack ice, huge, grinding blocks surging up and down upon a powerful tide. High on the banks, too, it lay in a white barricade, stranded there by the ebb to be freed by the next flow.

The force that lifted these tons of ice like so much cork, and heaved and toyed with them, seemed supernatural, yet it was wholly natural, for the Labrador tide had a rise and fall of forty feet on the Coast and of over sixty feet in the Straits. Down from frozen Baffin Land the Arctic gales had for days been harrying the Polar floes and pack ice. Past Akpatok and into Ungava Bay the Winter had marshaled its ghostly legions, and now at a stroke it had hurled them into harbor, sound and fiord and as far up the Koksoak, George and Whale as a forty-foot tide would bore.

The chill of so much ice was intense. Allied with the frost in the air, it pierced the men to the marrow. The river water froze solidly before their eyes, to be ripped to pieces again by the heave of the tide, and only by grace of this phenomenon was it possible for the three to embark.

Up the ice-cluttered breast of the river they forged, zigzagging from bank to bank, driving through the rips in the floes, and every mile they won was won in the teeth of disaster. Here the eddies centered the pack ice upon them, threatening to grind their craft to atoms. There they slipped by a fraction between the jaws of two colliding blocks before those white jaws met with a crunch. Yonder they back-watered from a roaring avalanche of the shore barricade. But grimly they battled for miles with the pack ice and finally fled from it and from the clutch of the tide.

Still in the days that passed, the river throughout its higher reaches was hardly less formidable than below. Rapids and waterfalls churned its waters into lather.

Log jams and granite bars bristled in the way. And always the frost thrust out its fetters, the shore ice widening magically night by night to seal the middle current. But no impediment was permitted to diminish their speed. They paddled their hearts out in the ascent and mutilated their bodies as they staggered along the slippery portages on the shore.

They practically crucified themselves alive to beat the frost to the river's source, but it was an essay beyond the power of any man. Before they made the branching of the Whale where the leviathan-like river threw its feelers east and west, the stream closed like a lid while they slept.

"She's de end of de paddle," announced Sachelle, tapping a toe upon it in the frosty

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dawn. "Now it is the sledge an' wan wait for sledgin' snow."

"Aye, it is the sledge," confirmed Ivan, "but we will not be waiting for sledging snow."

"The sledge won't be drag over de bare rock of de Barrens," Sachelle pointed out.

"We will not be trying bare rock. We will be keeping the river ice."

"But it is only skim ice yet, *saprie!* Skim ice an' rim ice w'ere dere be rapids. It is strong enough to stop wan canoe, but it is not strong enough to bear three men, four dogs an' de loaded sled."

"Man, it will have to bear! We can not be lying here for days waiting for deeper snow when we might be at Eraldson Post. We will travel yon skim ice and rim ice, and where there is neither to carry, we will wade the tefflish water. We have not an hour to waste. You are understanding me? You and Chakoni build the sledge."

"Is he not a slave-driver and a wizard and a giant?" asked Chakoni in Cree, while the two swiftly hewed the frame and runners of the sledge out of spruce and bound the joints with thongs cut from one of the caribou-skin sacks, which sacks also furnished leather for the dog harness. "A fit man for factor and a man for my heart to follow after."

"*Oui,* he is all you be say," agreed Sachelle, "an' I'm fancy it will be wan stiff trail to follow heem today."

It was indeed a stiff trail. Over rim ice and skim ice and no ice at all they tore off the river miles, and every mile was tallied by a freezing bath for one of them. Through rotten places in the Whale River's skin they dropped to their knees and their waists and their necks. Always they saved their dogs at the risk of losing themselves and pressed on without a fire.

Their tremendous exertion kept their sodden inner clothing in a pliant state, but their outer garments froze hard as shells. Sweating, they plunged into icy water and, dripping icy water, rushed on to sweat anew.

The dangerous immersions bothered Ivan not at all. Sheathed in a white armor, he wallowed ahead as a Polar bear wallows through the floes. Chakoni likewise endured with the primitive endurance of the savage Nascaupee, but during the forenoon Sachelle commenced to chill.

By afternoon the chill was a shake and a palsy, and when they went into camp at night, he lay down helpless, coughing in paroxysms, his head splitting, and his bones racked with shooting pains.

"She's de influenza, factor," he gasped. "I'm be have her once on de Nastapoka Rivaire, an' w'ere she walks once, she goes quick de second taim."

"Get into your blankets by the fire," importuned the factor. "While Chakoni prepares supper, I will be giving you a sweat bath and brewing you some spruce tea. There is nothing like them for influenza."

'Round a depression in the rocks within the camp space Ivan wedged a circle of sticks with two cross-pieces for a seat in the center. Under the seat whereon Sachelle huddled stark naked he deposited round stones heated red-hot in the campfire. Water was poured on the stones and the resulting vapor confined by a blanket canopy over the sticks, and Sachelle, exuding moisture from every pore, bathed in the smarting steam.

When the bath was finished, Ivan double-blanketed him, laid him close to the fire and plied him with a generous meal and great bowlfuls of spruce tea.

"You will be better in the morn," he told him, as, hot as fire in his wrappings, the chief trader dropped immediately to sleep.

Before morning the temperature took a terrific drop. Sachelle in his feverish heat knew nothing of it till the factor woke him.

"It is sound going at last," Ivan informed. "Ice three inches thick and snowing hard snow! We can launch out as fast as we please. We can make Eraldson Post to-night if you are fit to travel. Are you fit, man?"

Sachelle looked at the thick river ice and at the slant of snow through the larches.

"I be fit," he announced. "Go ahead!"

He was not by any means fit to travel, but he set his face in a weird grimace against his pain and stifled his coughs in his throat as he stuck all day to the killing pace. Splitting the cold and storm, they threaded the dwindling head reaches of the Whale, crossed a nameless oval body of water where the outlet of Manuan Lake, on the plateau to the south, came in, twisted eastward up the last winding tip of the Whale and defiled on Eraldson Lake.

IN THE distance, huddling homelike against the barren hills and the ragged spruce, they beheld their goal.

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"No smoke, no movement," panted the factor, halting to sight closely. "Men, I am fearing something has happened them."

A tumult beating in his heart, he dashed ahead on the tripper's run. As he neared the log Post, he saw that the snow lay unmarred about it and that upon the step the sand-like grains were drifted in a fantastic cornice. He broke the cornice ruthlessly with his moccasin, pushed open the door and entered. The sledge churning up behind him was anchored on its side, and Chakoni and Sachelle stumbled pantingly after.

Inside was the silence of desertion. The gear and trappings of the North still hung about the rude walls, rods, nets and paddles of the Summer season, moccasins, snowshoes, *koolutuks* of the Winter season. The casual eye would have accepted these as freshly put out of hand, but to the experienced eyes of Ivan and the others a certain rigidity in their set upon the pegs advertised their permanent poise.

In the center of the farther wall the factor's keen glance discovered a few pegs evidently stripped, and he stepped over to see what manner of gear that section held. But his glance was diverted from the surrounding gear by a square of white paper tacked against the logs. He stared at it in the dim light and realized that it was Clavaire's diary.

The entries covered from the day of their arrival on August the seventh to the day of their departure on September the seventh. There were many items of interest, but those of the last day summed up the situation. They ran:

September 7th—The keepers have not come back. Something evidently wrong. Accident has overtaken them or else the Post has been abandoned. We have during the last fortnight put ourselves on rations. We have been able to get a few fish to eke out the supply, but no game on account of the barrenness of the district. A move is imperative. There is no use going eastward. Starvation there. The Indians of Indian House Lake had failed to intercept the main migration of the caribou when we came in. So we must try Manuan Lake.

There is a tribe there, and if we can not strike them or encounter game, we must try to break through to the Kaniapiskau River. I should not worry so much about getting out were it not for the sake of my daughter Landra who is with me. I do not admit it to her, but I do not know how things will swing.

I have no means of even knowing if Channing won through to Chimo. Perhaps disaster smote him. It is such a barren country, and the dire contingencies are so many. It would be madness to stay on the chance of his reaching the Fort and sending back relief if he learned what is wrong with Eraldson and realized our plight.

We have risked it too long already. It would be the middle of Winter before relief could get in now, and we— We must help ourselves. For any who may come seeking I leave this record and the direction of our going. And now, for better or for worse, we take the trail. Good-by this day to Eraldson!

(Signed) TEMBER CLAVAIRE.
Of the Channing Labrador Expedition.

" 'Fore Heffen," groaned Ivan, "but doom is dogging the man. For why will he be trying Manuan Lake?"

"Dere's no tribe dere," wheezed Sachelle through his clogged air-passages. "It went nort' in de Summer."

"True," Chakoni nodded, "some of them joined our people for the journey to the Post. They will find no Nascaupees there."

"No, and no game," declared the factor. "It is a kinder country than this in Summer, but in Winter it is all the same. I am fearing for Clavaire, men, and also for the girl. And most of all I am fearing for the girl! Landra, a fair name it is and, according to her uncle, herself as fair as the name! The Summer Labrador she may frolic in as a playground, but the Winter Labrador she can not face. We must succor her with all speed."

"Dat won't be easy t'ing," Sachelle ventured. "Dey have sooch wan long start, an' de country between Manuan Lake an' de Kaniapiskau is wan maze of lakes an' rivaires."

"We have the speed in the dogs," Ivan reminded. "Aye, and the signs in the snow. There was no snow here at Eraldson when they left, but, losh! they would meet lots of it in the Manuan country. They will be keeping the natural highway of the snowbound lakes and rivers. They must leave a trail, and knowing their course will make the seeking easier.

"Also I am thanking Heffen at this moment that a snowshoe track once made in the Northland neffer fades till the thaw. It may be buried in fresh falls, I am admitting, but the next wind sweeps it clear and leaves the oval pads sticking up like little islets in a foamy sea. So we will hit Manuan Lake in a mad drive, and syne we will catch their scent. And I am half-minded to start this darting minute. How are the dogs, Chakoni? Can they travel on?"

"It would not be wise," counseled Chakoni. "They have come far and hard, and

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their feet have suffered with the water and ice. We must watch the feet, lest they chafe and bleed. It is better to rest them till dawn."

"Yes, it is wisdom to rest," acquiesced the factor, "though it is my way to flare ahead and neither give nor take rest. So let them recuperate. The Barren Ground passage is hard on the feet. Let them rest, and rest yourselves. It will be a wicked drive, and we will be away before the light. Are you still feeling fit for it, Sachelle?"

"*Oui*, still fit!" lied Sachelle.

CHAPTER VI

THE HAZARD OF THE BARRENS

IN THE dark of the dawn the three crawled out of their bunks in Eraldson Post, threw fresh wood upon the coals in the Hudson's Bay stove, cooked and ate breakfast. Then they quickly arrayed themselves for their journey. Other pegs were relieved of the accouterments they held, and another stripped space on the wall stared blank as the one Tember Clavaire and his daughter had left.

On their feet they put fresh moccasins and long-tail snowshoes; on their lower limbs deerskin leggings reaching to their thighs and on their backs *kooluluks*, long, parka-like, hooded coats of deerskin tanned soft as chamois, with the hair left on inside.

Thus geared for Wintry weather and for heavy snows, they harnessed their dogs and launched forth on the trail. The dark still held. The cold was bitter. The storm, which had smothered the Barrens with a deep blanket of white, had died as suddenly as it had arisen. The world lay silent, empty, choked with gloom.

Across the ice of Eraldson Lake they headed. Manuan Lake lay to the south and west, just over the sixty-sixth meridian, and at the very start for it Ivan hit up a tremendous pace. In the lead he ran, breaking trail for the team, with his snowshoes packing down the snow in front of them and leveling the way for their feet. Light as a sprinter in spite of his great weight he traveled, lurching at the hips with the tripper's swing, taking the lift for every stride from the spring of the webbing under his heel. In his wake loped the four-dog team driven by Sachelle whom the factor had forbidden to toil at the front.

Behind the sledge came Chakoni, running easily in the beaten track, resting himself in readiness to take his turn at trail-breaking when the time should arrive. The dogs were harnessed to the sledge komatik-fashion, each with a separate collar thong to one main trace, but they did not maintain the fan formation very closely. They rather approached the single pack hitching which Ivan had been forced to contrive on the bad ice of the Whale, running well in line, one as nearly behind the other as possible so as to take best advantage of the broken trail.

Steering their course by the stars, the outfit passed from Eraldson out over the barren plateau that stretched to Manuan. There, with better purchase for the feet of men and dogs and also for the runners of the sledge, the speed increased.

For an hour Ivan hurled them across the level stretch, then, his body steaming in a white cloud and the fringe of his koolutuk hood iced up with his breathing, he dropped back to let Chakoni take his place. When he went ahead to relieve the Nascaupee at the end of the second hour, the sun leaped up out of the snows as if out of a sea of foam. A burning disc, a fountain of blood it blazed, pouring a crimson flood of light across the spotless drifts.

Black as negro Titans the rocks jutted up here and there, dividing the flood with their hulking masses against which the light spattered in a golden spray. Weird shadows mottled the waste, a riot of hues, a crime in color. Mauve splotches the men's shadows raced as they raced. The rock shadows lay slowly revolving pools of purple. The image of a solitary spruce fell ashy-gray.

But though the sun blazed bright, there was no warmth in its rays. Cold as the mock suns that gleam when the Long Night descends on the North it gleamed, and the only heat the runners had was the heat their exertions engendered. On and on they plunged. Fifteen miles had been passed. Not a word had been spoken, and to Ivan, still breaking trail in front, the sudden cry of Chakoni shattering the frosty stillness was like a strange wail in the Barrens.

He stared ahead, to the right, to the left to locate its utterer, then bethought himself and turned short in his stride.

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THE sledge was stopped. Sachelle lay on his breast across it, one hand pressed against the runner, the other clutching the shoulder of Chakoni, who was bending to lift him. Agony was on the chief trader's face, and like the red staining of the risen sun, blood poured from his mouth onto the packed snow.

Ivan darted back to him. He on one side and Chakoni on the other, they raised the chief trader and laid him on his back on the sledge. Ivan broke a piece of ice from a near-by boulder and slipped it into the bleeding mouth.

"Suck it, man, suck it," he whispered gently. "It will be stopping the hemorrhage."

Eyes closed, Sachelle sucked away at the ice while the crimson froth welled out of his lips. Presently the ice took effect, and the froth ceased welling. He raised his gantlet and rasped it across his mouth to blot away the crimson stain.

"She's de Nastapoka curse," he moaned with the fretfulness of the sick. "She's left me wit' de strength of wan child w'en de trail be call for wan man to toil. Go on an' be leave me here."

"It can not be by any manner of being," declared the factor. "And yours is no child's strength, Sachelle. I am to blame. I am seeing I drove you and Chakoni more than able men would bear through the Barrens' portage in the blizzard, through the pack ice, skim ice, rim ice and freezing waters of the Whale, and now the swift rush through the strangling cold has stabbed your lungs. Your forward trail stops here, Sachelle. This moment you will be going back."

"But dis Clavaire!" groaned the chief trader. "An' dis girl Landra! It is killin' deir chances to be quit de search. Roll me into camp an' be leave me some food. I be manage well enough."

"No," refused Ivan again. "It is killing yourself to do that, and I will not have murder on my hands. You must go back. It is my command. Raise him, Chakoni—thus, while I rearrange the packs."

Working rapidly, the factor bulked the load of the sled well toward the back, hollowing a space in its middle and spreading Sachelle's blankets therein. Chakoni lowered the chief trader into this depression and drew the blankets tightly 'round him. The sick man rested as in a bed, low to the earth and easy to be transported.

"Fair grand that it happened when we had dogs!" exclaimed Ivan. "With careful driving he will be little racked."

"Do you drive, factor? Or do I?" asked the fort-runner.

"You, Chakoni; you alone! I go on."

In spite of his tremendous stoicism the Nascaupee started, ejaculated aloud and stared unbelieving as Ivan took his rifle and a fifty-pound food-pack from the sledge.

"Fifty pounds and my outfit is all I can be managing," he observed. "For the rest I will be trusting to get game."

Chakoni took a swift step or two and gazed despairingly into the factor's face.

"It is a madness that sits on you," he expostulated in Cree. "It is even such a madness as possessed the lost white man we found that night of the fog and rain upon the Koksoak's shore. You can not find them alone, on foot, in the Barrens. You have not the food to make the search. Also you can not bring them forth if you do find them. If you go on, there will be three to die instead of two. Go not on. It is Chakoni who asks. We have been blood-brothers through frost and plague and famine and fight, and it is like a knife in my heart to see you waste yourself. It is a lost cause in the beginning, factor, and there is no use in going."

"Neffertheless I must be trying," returned Ivan, simply. "Tember Clavaire and his daughter are traversing a country under my Company's sovereignty, and it is incumbent upon me as a servant of that Company to be lending them the Company's aid. That is the prime consideration, you will be admitting, but there are others. It is guilt that lies on me for closing Eraldson Post without due proclamation.

"I should have ordered a notice left on the door to prevent chance wayfarers trusting to it. There was no precedent for it, and, losh! who would have thought of any wayfarers at Eraldson? There has neffer been a strange white man, much less a strange white woman, near its doors in many a long month. Yet all the same I should have foreseen.

"I should have had the wit to guard against such a contingency. I have had a lesson. I shall neffer be closing another Post without making it plain to all comers —though there be none for all. This is the moral obligation that is weighing upon me, you understand, and by the help of Heffen

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I will be discharging it. So it is good-by for the present, Chakoni, and good-by to you, Sachelle. Should we look eye to eye again, it is a well man I am hoping to see."

"But for de love of God, factor, be take more food dan dat!" implored Sachelle.

"I can not carry more and the outfit and make speed," Ivan pointed out. "It must be a dash or nothing. And you will perhaps be needing all that is left before you get out yourselves. For you will be remembering, Sachelle, that you must move as Chakoni moves. I will not be leaving the schedule to you because I know you would push on whether fit or no with the hope of benefiting me in the end.

"So it is Chakoni I command, and I command him to lie up with you at Eraldson Post till you are sound enough to travel. Then he will be making Indian House Lake, the George River Post and Chimo, but only and always as you are fit, Sachelle. You are grasping my meaning, Chakoni? It is your factor's mandate. When you reach Chimo, get fresh dogs and come up the Koksoak to meet me. If I find Tember Clavaire and the girl, I will be crossing over the Barrens to the Kaniapiskau where you with the dogs can strike our trail. And should I not find them—why, I will be crossing over just the same. Now the whip to your dogs, Chakoni, and good-by again!"

Eyes fixed wistfully upon the factor, Chakoni edged to his team. His primitive wisdom, his knowledge of the land and the hazard the factor was accepting, moved him mightily to refuse, to disobey and to thus make the acceptance impossible, but the voice of authority was over him, the command he had ever obeyed was laid upon him, and it moved him more mightily still. He cracked his whip over his team, and the sledge with the blanket-wrapped Sachelle upon it whirled back to Eraldson Post.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRIT-TRAIL

NOT on Manuan but on far Nachikopi did Ivan Trevor strike warm scent. On the shores of the former lake he had found a double trail made by long-tail snowshoes which could be none other than that of Clavaire and his daughter, but the trail was old, ancient, oval pads of snow, formed by the pressure of the rackets and sticking up in a raised line where the wind had drifted away the newly fallen crystals.

Yet here on Nachikopi twisted a different track, fresh, shallow depressions lying clear in the dazzling afternoon glare, the scoring of the racket webbing showing sharp and fine, and the loose, fluffy side-walls of snow standing as yet uniced. The trail was exceedingly fresh.

Breathless, Ivan was nearing the end he had sought so long. Behind him were many miles of wandering over Manuan Lake and the chain of lakes and rivers connecting the Manuan and the Nachikopi countries. Behind him were days and days of hounding through frost, snow, blizzard, silence and desolation. Baffled by storm, hindered by wind, losing the trail and finding it again by circles, by cut-offs, by new fellings in the timber and by old fires on the crust he had traced Clavaire and the girl thus far in their attempt to break through to the Kaniapiskau River.

Ahead they must be and close ahead, perhaps ten miles, perhaps five, he could not tell. He had not come upon their last night's camp because he had not followed their old trail along the little river which flowed into the eastern end of Nachikopi Lake. The trail had been drifted in the day before. It had had no appearance of freshening, and Ivan could guess its trend by the fact that Nachikopi lay but a score of miles farther on. So to gain time he had at dawn taken the cut-off across the neck of land lying like a wedge at the junction of the river and the lake, calculating his course so as to strike the northern shore at a point beyond Nachikopi's inlet, and by afternoon he ran upon the fresh tracks in the benchland spruce. The tracks wound up off the lake ice over the back of a long, low promontory whence, Ivan presumed, they dipped to the ice again.

The rise of the promontory and the green growth shut out his view, but, panting, he dashed up the slope and tore aside the screen of boughs. In the stainless foreground of the snow-scene that burst upon his vision streaked the racket tracks. In the middle distance, a mile or so up the bosom of the lake, crawled two black specks. Ahead of them stretched white, unmarred expanse rimmed by the western shore of Nachikopi bulking purple against the faint-blue Winter sky.

Shielding his eyes with his hands from

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the sun-dazzle, Ivan stared at the crawling specks. No bigger than black foxes they seemed at that distance, and even while Ivan stared, as the black fox goes down suddenly and flatly before a rifle bullet, so one of the specks went down.

The other speck dropped swiftly beside it, pulling and trying to raise, but the first was no more than stirred, and then the factor knew that it was the man who had fallen and that the girl could not put forth strength enough to lift him.

"Wait!" he roared, hands to his mouth like a trumpet. "You can not do it alone. Wait! I will be coming to you."

The echo of his cry reverberated down Nachikopi's frozen surface, flinging wildly from rock to rock, and as wildly as his echo Ivan flung down the ice to the two. Spurning the crust behind him, he tore off yards at every stride, and the girl, staggering up at his cry, turned weakly to meet him.

DRESSED in the gear taken from the walls of Eraldson Post, *koolutuk*, leggings and long-tail snowshoes, she seemed in Ivan's eyes passing tall, a full foot taller than the Nascaupee women he was used to seeing, and her face under the fur fringe of the koolutuk hood, though wan and thin with fasting, shone many times more fair. But with all her height and her seeming poise, there was in her movements the hint of exhaustion, the helplessness that hunger imbues. She swayed on her snowshoes in the few steps she took so that Ivan, drawing up abruptly in his rush, put out his hands and grasped hers to steady her.

And with that touch the miracle of her being broke upon him. He drew breath with a catch in his chest, and his muscles trembled as he held her rigidly erect. The lone years were no more, and his eternal vision through the Long Gloom of the Northland Winters of a white woman's face was realized with a stinging suddenness that smote him momentarily blind and dizzy.

Then the clear, sane glance of the gray eyes he faced cleared his eyes and brain. In a long look he read the portent of the moment, and in that moment of understanding his soul went out to her.

"'Fore Heffen, girl! You say so?" he breathed, though she had uttered no word.

"Yes," she answered in a weak voice that fell like a whisper in the immense frost-void, "to spare me he wasted himself in spite of all entreaties. Last night he could hardly travel, and now he travels the spirit-trail."

"God forgie's! That I should be too late!"

"Don't — don't reproach yourself," she whispered. "You have come far, fast and afoot. I see that. You are from——"

"Chimo! Ivan Trevor the factor! Your uncle Seton Channing came through, you will be understanding, starved almost to death. He was so weak that I sent him back to his starting point on the Company's ship. I left with my chief trader Sachelle and my Nascaupee Fort runner Chakoni for Eraldson Post. We reached it, read your father's notice on the wall and started fast, but Sachelle fell ill on the Barrens, and Chakoni had to take him back. I came on. I am late, but it is better than being —later."

"*Is* it?" asked Landra despairingly.

"Yes, yes," asserted Ivan, hurriedly. "For why will you be doubting? You are staggering with hunger and toil, I know, and the suffering breeds pessimism. But you must be resting and eating. We will camp on the shore yonder. Steady yourself and go ahead, slow and canny—so! I will—well, I will be coming after."

While Landra made her way unsteadily toward the spruce on the shore, the factor bent over Tember Clavaire. He lay on his side, slowly growing cold under the frost, his face turned to the west where his unfinished land-trail led, and upon his famished countenance Ivan read the anguish of a man who, working out another's salvation through sacrifice, dies with that salvation uncompassed.

The expression of anguish was intense. Clavaire's soul seemed to cry out through his features against the terrible power of the North that so relentlessly menaced the girl, and interpreting his last thought, Ivan swore a great and silent vow that her salvation should not go uncompassed.

Gently he raised Clavaire's body and bore it to the shore. Hacking off spruce boughs, he made a rude couch, laid the body on the couch and covered it with his blanket.

Close by he kindled a fire and spread the canvas fly he had carried in his outfit to catch and deflect the heat. There Landra sat in the shelter watching Ivan open his

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scant food-pack and cook the meal of tea, bannocks and caribou meat.

She noted the limpness of the pack and knew that his supply was low, that the long trail from Eraldson Post had eaten it up pound by pound, but she made no comment. For the moment it was enough that after starvation the tang of tea was upon her tongue and the ravishing sweetness of meat upon her lips.

She ate as Ivan plied her, stealing from the future what she must inevitably pay for, but deliberately stealing it nevertheless to bolster her present weakness.

The sun failed, and the early Winter dark fell over Nachikopi as they ate and briefly recounted to each other the experiences of the past days. The stars blazed forth over the marble Barrens, and the aurora played searchlight-like in the Northern sky. Their fire burned ruddily below, etching out their sitting figures and the prostrate form upon the couch of spruce boughs.

Ivan spoke more fully of his dash in from Chimo, and Landra told in detail of their stay at Eraldson before hope of the Post keepers' coming was dead, of the suspense and foreboding of the final hours, of their dash to Manuan Lake to non-discovery of the Manuan tribe and disappointment, and then of the starvation trail to Nachikopi.

"You see," she concluded, with a head motion of tender significance toward the silent one by the fire, "he knew the country in a general way, and he had hopes of crossing this lake and Big Beaver Lake and keeping on to Kanachakagamau Lake and thence reaching the Kaniapiskau River. Was he not right? Was there a better way out?"

"None better, and he was right, Landra! For you will not mind me calling you Landra, eh? And you will be calling me Ivan. There is no need for Mistress or Mister in the North. That you know."

"True, Ivan, I know. I was born in the North and I know its needs. Lac La Biche was our home."

"In the Saskatchewan country! Your feet have traveled farther trails than I thought. And forby at first sight I knew you were a Northwoman, and in that moment I was thanking God that you were strong to bear and unbroken. From your uncle's description I was sore afraid of coming upon a Southland girl, fair as the forelights of the dawn I will be admitting, but soft as wax under adversity, hysterical and prone to die in the presence of death.

"It means much to us both, Landra—aye, it means more than I can tell you that you have looked on death with the Northwoman's eyes and are still ready to go forward under the demands of life. And that is what we must be doing without delay in the morn. Remember, he—" with a pause and a glance toward the silent one—"would not be countenancing delay. From his resting-place he would be pressing you on. So there is but that to look to, his resting-place, and then you must sleep for the onward trail."

TAKING his ax, Ivan stepped softly into the spruce forest. Landra, sitting by the fire, saw a tiny flame spring up between the black trunks and grow and brighten. Then the blows of his ax rang out, and the crashing of trees shattered the silence of the frosty night. She knew, for she had seen men buried in the North before, and had looked on their tombs where the ground was solid rock and the boulders were immovable in the grip of ice and snow.

She went over and knelt beside the still form while the ax was ringing, and when she heard Ivan's steps again she arose and silently let him take up his burden. Into the spruce she walked in his tracks, and there by the fire he had kindled, loomed a log cache, strongly built in the shape of an A with the interstices tightly chinked with smaller poles and moss. One end was open, and Ivan laid the blanketed form down upon a layer of spruce boughs inside.

"I will be keeping the blanket," he murmured, stripping it away. "It grieves me sore, but we will be needing it, and the demands of life we can not be ignoring."

He rolled it up slowly and put it to one side. Landra stood looking a little upon the face in the koolutuk hood so dimly outlined by the furtive flames, then she bent and kissed it and moved to one side to let Ivan finish the burial.

Ivan picked up an armful of spruce boughs, hesitated and put them down again.

"Perhaps I had better be reading a few verses before covering," he suggested softly.

He gazed inquiringly at Landra and receiving her nod of assent produced the small Bible, bound in flexible leather, that

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always reposed in his pockets with his pipe. He opened it at Solomon's Proverbs, underscored in red ink by his heavy hand, and began to read:

"The labor of the righteous tendeth to life; the fruit of the wicked to sin.

He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.

The lips of the righteous feed many; but fools die for want of wisdom.

The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

When he finished, he stepped reverently to the opening in the cache, spread the green boughs and heaved the end logs in place. Spruce his bier, spruce his shroud, spruce his tomb, Tember Clavaire lay in his last resting-place by lone Nachikopi, with a strong-spirited girl and a great-hearted man silently grieving for him. But not then, at the sealing of the tomb, did the girl show her grief—not till Ivan kicked snow on the fire before leaving, and let the dark drop on the forest like a cloak.

Then her spirit broke. She crumpled in the snow, voicing her loneliness and affliction in a wild cry, and groping for Ivan's knees in the gloom.

"Heaven help me, but it is hard, Ivan," she moaned. "I would be strong, but in the frost and the silence, in the desolation and the dark, it is hard."

"Aye, Landra, it is hard," he comforted, "but you will be remembering you are not alone. As much as lies within a man I will be making all things easy for you. Take heart of hope, girl, and stay not in the snow and the cold. Put your hands on my shoulders—so! And be gripping the ax and the blanket for me. I will be carrying you back to camp."

He raised her like a child from her crumpled position to his breast. The steel pressed in her hands, and herself pressed in his giant arms, she felt herself borne back to the fire and the sheltering fly, and though perhaps she did not realize it, in that moment of comforting, her soul went out to him.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COSMIC WILD

ONLY two-thirds of the way down long Nachikopi did they travel before swerving westward across-country from its northern shore. Like a pair of inverted bladders tied to one string lay Nachikopi and Big Beaver Lakes. The string was the Nachikapau River, and between the two lakes and running down to the Nachikapau's bank drove a wedge of practically barren land.

Across this barren wedge lay the shortest route to Big Beaver, and that was why Ivan took it instead of following the Nachikopi shore round and defiling upon the upper Nachikapau. Yet, though the miles were shortened, progress was very slow because of the barren stretches where no fire could be had, and which necessitated arduous detours to strike the ragged, solitary thickets, and of Landra's inability to travel fast. The latter was the main handicap. The girl could not help but recognize it and feel that she was a drag on Ivan's pace. Continually she fretted over it, and she lamented the fact to herself as they forged snail-like across the Barrens.

Yet call upon her muscles and her will as she might, she could not make the rackets work any faster than a painful shuffle. Time and again Ivan was forced to ease up in his breaking of the trail for her, to fall back and take her by the hand, he walking in the side-snow and she in the packed track till they reached the packed track's end and it became necessary for him to trample the crust anew.

"A stone on your neck, Ivan!" she burst out once. "Would that I had been born a man to make a dash for the Kaniapiskau with you!"

"And I would not, girl, that you had been born a man!" Ivan answered. "I have traveled with all sorts and manner of men, and some of them were grand men at that, but neffer before has my camp been hallowed with a white woman's presence, and neffer before have I been hearing behind me the crunch of a white woman's snowshoe upon the trail I have beaten.

"Aye, I am telling you plain, Landra, there is a sweetness in it, a preciousness I would not be giving up for speed, and all that speed might bring. But neffertheless

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you will not be worrying about the pace. Slow, sure and steady effort is better than blind fling and fall. We will be making the Kaniapiskau safe enough. And Chakoni will be dog-lashing it up-river to meet us. He knows the trend of my trail, and yonder on the Kaniapiskau, or perhaps nearer than that, we will be casting eyes on him."

Still, although he spoke lightly and encouragingly, Ivan was troubled by the slowness of their advance, and he knew in his secret heart that his suppositions about Chakoni were but credulous suppositions, or, to speak more plainly, but merciful, soothing lies. If they could not cover ground faster than they were doing, he realized that Chakoni's chances of arriving in time to succor them were desperately slim.

Niggardly he watched the days draw out, impotent to stay their flitting, impotent to do more than he was doing in their brief space of light, and equally impotent to find sign of any game, caribou, wolf, fox, or ptarmigan, to replace the diminishing pittance in his food-pack.

Ruthlessly, almost magically, stint though they did, the pack sagged more and more, and by the time they struck Big Beaver Lake, crossed its southernmost portion and held on for the Nachikapau River their handful of flour ran out.

Half-way down the Nachikapau the last shred of caribou meat disappeared. Thence to Kanachakagamau Lake they had only a few ounces of tea to boil, and by the time the lake was reached, the frozen lump of tea leaves and dregs, used over and over again a score of times, had likewise vanished.

Because the pursuit to Nachikopi had extended so long, Ivan had been compelled to use up the greater part of the fifty pounds of food he had started with. Finding no game in that early stage, he had cut his rations to mere mouthfuls at a time, yet the supply had dwindled in spite of all his hoarding.

And this hoarding threatened to bring him disaster in the end, because as he cut his food he cut his strength. That splendid strength was already beginning to be undermined when he found the two on Nachikopi, and now on distant Kanachakagamau, alone with Landra, the fiery dash and vim which were his salient attributes, died out as soon as nutriment lacked.

He realized that he was physically slowing up, and the realization angered him and goaded him to fictitious bursts of energy to throw it off. Yet these bursts, instead of accomplishing relief, only augmented the insidious weakness which inevitably grew.

Landra herself was but a shell to commence with. True, a few days' food, a few nights' rest, and the shifting of the mental responsibility for the traverse upon her stronger companion, had stimulated her marvelously, but it was patently only a stimulant, and once hunger gripped her again, depression followed as swiftly as elation had sprung.

Not alone was it hunger that oppressed them and squeezed the power from their tissues. It was as well the iron combination of antagonistic element and relentless environment.

Through piercing frost, smothering snows and stabbing winds, they staggered forward, making their plunge on the trail during diamond-bright days that blinded with their crust-blaze, and lying recuperating in camp through velvet-dark nights, sealed with intense silence and beaconed by the luminous stars and the effulgent, radium-beamed aurora.

There was no suggestion of feeling, no warmth, no cheer anywhere in the vast barrens about them—in the trail beneath their feet or in the frost-smoked sky overhead, save the feeling that emanated from the great heart of the man, and the warmth and cheer of the camp-fire crackling wanly in the day space, or roaring defiance to the frost and the gloom by night.

FUEL was the one necessity of life of which there was a plenitude. Lakes and rivers all along had been fringed with spruce and larch, and, unless it was where necessary to endure the fireless barrens for a period in making a cut-off, they could at least be warm whenever they halted.

Still fire, mighty blessing though it proved, could not in itself supply them with the muscular power that moved. Within its warm circle of grace their physical beings responded to its influence. Their heat-loving flesh quivered, and they made a travesty of eating with scraps of bark and twigs and frozen berries, while setting their hearts on new hopes for the morrow. But out on the thin trail, through the stark snows on the morrow, those hopes were no more.

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Their flesh and their very souls were numb under the crushing pressure of the cold, the wind, the silence, the blinding nebulosity of the atmosphere, and the utter remoteness of the lone land's mirage-like boundaries.

So it went day by day, their efforts growing weaker, the trail ahead by the same token growing longer. For they had come to measure ground not in space but in time. On the bosom of giant Kanachakagamau, the ice-stretch to yonder headland they glimpsed, to yonder spruce clump, to yonder bay, or to the outjut of yonder azoic moraine, was the length of a day to them, and not so many miles. And the curse of it was that their days grew ever shorter.

Now the sun never rose till noon. Then it bulged up far to the south, scarcely clearing the spruce tops and poising there for half an hour—a wan, dead planet gazing on a dead waste, and dropping back almost where it rose. There were but three hours of what might truthfully be called daylight. Daily that stretch became less. Greedily the long night was usurping the realm of the sun; and with the advent of the dark, the silence, the desolation, the intangible, incredible voidness of the barrens increased one hundredfold.

Like gray ghosts in a gray ghost-world the two journeyed together down mysterious, gloom-wrapped Kanachakagamau. They stumbled side by side, for there was no trail to break. What snow covered the lake-ice was wind-packed to crusty hardness.

Their shoes sank not at all. The webs creaked weirdly, and the long tails tap-tapped upon the solid surface like the clacking of skeletons' bones. Mere shades of their former selves they reeled along, hand in hand, amid isolation petrified and awful, and that awful isolation struck fusing communion in their tottering selves.

Hand took the comfort of clasped hand, and it seemed to them that they had always walked thus, always known each other through the long gloom of the Northern years, and always sounded the depths of each other's natures for the virtues that resided there to unwhimperingly meet cold, silence, starvation and in the ultimate end, dissolution.

About them the normal earth had disintegrated suddenly, crumbled from complexity to simplification, and this Caliban earth Ivan and Landra looked on with the vision of their martyred souls was abnormal, terrifying in its primal loom as the abysmal scowl of hell.

Like the frigid, soul-smiting, horrific land through which they passed, a land stripped naked of food, light, life and all the attributes of life, they, too, were stripped of all extraneous considerations and of the extrinsic things. The fly that had sheltered them was gone. Gone were the empty food-pack and the useless cooking utensils. Gone were Ivan's rifle and ammunition, which he had clung to till the last in the vain hope of seeing game.

About them were none of the possessions which formed the links connecting them with the old and normal life, save the ax at Ivan's belt and the rabbitskin blankets, which hung in loose loops around their necks—shields by day against the lance of the frost and the saber of the wind; by night warm coverings to keep the life-spark glowing in their exhausted frames.

Feebly that spark glowed, the pulse primordial of life still beating defiant in the grasp of incontestable power; moving across the carved, sphinx-like, frozen face of the wild, which abhorred all movement, and decreed that all things that moved must ultimately merge immovable into its own deathly equilibrium.

Under the stare of the barren wild, under that immutable, god-like, cosmic stare, the feeble atoms that in a seemingly far ancient day were Landra Clavaire and Ivan Trevor, crawled on and unceasingly crawled on. With that blind, instinctive antagonism in the souls of humans that spurs on all life, they refused to give up the struggle. The pitiable contest still went on under the brooding eyes of the gigantic waste, and even in the moment of Landra's abrupt collapse on the Kanachakagamau's breast, there seemed, under the urge of life, to be no break in the conflict.

In a flash the battle of two against the North became the battle of one against the North, and Landra's intense craving for life was transmuted into Ivan's veins at her touch as she tried to push him away alone on the forward trail.

"I am done, Ivan; I am done!" she cried. "Leave me. You go on—and on—and on!"

But he stooped, pressed down her pushing hands and by infinite straining raised her so that she lay limp upon his breast and shoulder.

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"Aye, I will be going on," he gasped. "But not alone, Landra. Not effer alone again!"

A moment he swayed, unable to take the first step under her weight. Then drawing for strength upon the marrow of his bones, upon the innermost bolsters of his steel spirit, he crooked his knees uncertainly and, half-crouching, stumbled off across the cosmic face of the Wild.

CHAPTER IX

THE ULTIMATE HOUR

THROUGH monomania, through phantasmagoria; through crucifixion, Ivan Trevor launched forward from Kanachakagamau toward the Kaniapiskau River. It was no rational traverse. It was an insane orgasm, a debauch of suffering, an orgy of toil.

Hardly able to work up momentum at first, he was finally astounded to find his emaciated self straining at a rapid pace, the incandescent soul of him burning itself out in a last flare.

As before he had lost all track of distance, he now lost all track of time. He knew not what hours he spent upon the trail or what hours were passed in huddling by the fire. The only thing he had clear and acute conception of was that it was a living Landra whom he lifted to his shoulder on taking the trail and that it was still a living Landra whom he lowered on quitting it.

For the rest his mind concerned itself only with the knowledge that the Kaniapiskau writhed somewhere farther on and that somewhere upon that same Kaniapiskau the Nascaupee Fort runner Chakoni must be hurtling along a string of wolfish dogs.

Ever Ivan stared ahead with his bleared, inflamed, snow-blind eyes, faint in the moments of expectancy when his vision deceived him and he conjured up the Indian, the huskies and the sled breaking out of the frost-clouds that smoked the horizon of the waste. Around him the land was a hell of light and refraction of light.

Day space was gone, but the anomaly of intenser radiance remained to bathe all things. The steel stars pricked through the ghostly vapors in a blue spray. The crimson aurora streaked and eddied like a livid river of blood.

And not alone in the heavens above did conflagrations blaze and shimmer, but in the earth beneath. The vast sweep of snow-crust gave back the illumination from above. The frost crystals were lances and jets and pools of flame, and the drifts rolled billowy-red. Even the somber spruce lost contrast in that molten inferno. Snow-plastered by storms, their branches were glinting brands, and a weird phosphorescence smeared their hidden trunks.

The uncouth aspect of it all shattered Ivan's mental adjustments. Huge man and super-strong of body and mind as he had been and terrible as he still was in his savage orgasm, the North about him loomed huger and stronger and more terrible. Fear of it he had never known save the philosophical fear of respect, but now it struck cowering terror in him through indeterminate menaces. Mad mirages encompassed him, pagan revels of the elements in their naked primality, soul-shaking sorceries of disproportion and illusion.

Yet through the crucible of fear, through the furnace of the Flaming Night he strained on and on. He took no note of his path. He did not mark the ice of the Swampy Bay River which, flowing out of Kanachakagamau Lake and emptying into the Kaniapiskau River, was the natural route which his feet intuitively and blindly kept. Nor did he mark its white-mantled shores swimming with ruby light, a second fluid river flowing over the one congealed. He pressed on blindly, his eyes closed and his face jet-blackened with charcoal from his camp-fires to mitigate the awful pricking of the light.

Continually he assured himself that Landra was alive, generally by turning a dulled ear to catch her incoherent babblings, but oftentimes by putting up a hand to feel the warmth in her face when her babblings ceased and he feared that she was sinking. But at these times he always found the febrile heat of life there, and presently she would wake from the stupor of exhaustion to babble again.

She babbled of Lac la Biche, of the Saskatchewan, of the Athabasca, of the Lesser Slave and of the Peace, and always her incoherencies were of the hot Northern Summers, of flaming flowers and running streams. Never did her dreams turn from the seasons of mellowed atmospheres and bountiful foods. This in itself, had Ivan's brain been clear to deduce, would have been

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to him an omen of the approaching end, but his brain was not clear. He was glad to hear the babbling and was satisfied that life was still triumphant.

BUT the moment came when Landra ceased to babble and did not wake from her period of stupor as was her custom, and that was the moment when Ivan burst out of the disproportionate, menacing world, the world of unreality and illusion into real and tangible surroundings. Though he could see but dimly, he suddenly sensed the fact that he had reached the junction of the Swampy Bay and Kaniapiskau Rivers. He strained his eyes and indistinctly made out the two flat, ice-lidded, snow-covered waterways, the angle of drifted land where they merged, the rock shoulder to the right and the spruce-fringed ridges high beyond that.

Assuredly it was the Kaniapiskau, it was the North he knew!

Inevitably with the abrupt resumption of the lone land's normal aspect came abrupt resumption of his normal self, and that normal self was a starved self, devoid of strength or motion. As the large-blown, Caliban world of illusion dissolved to stark reality, so his incandescence of soul, his furious orgasm of body died out in a second.

There on the middle of the Kaniapiskau's ice he sagged in mid-stride and collapsed under the weight of the girl. That weight which he had carried so long without collapsing now lay upon his chest like a log. It pinned him down, smothered his breathing, held him tenaciously from the accomplishment of the purpose which ruled him even in the moment of helplessness. He rolled from side to side, thrashed the bosom of the Kaniapiskau with his arms and legs in an effort to get clear.

Finally he got his shoulders and his head free, and by writhing on his side the weight was eased down onto the ice.

Still, he could not rise, could not even draw himself to his knees. He sidled 'round like a lizard and bent his lips to the hood of the girl's koolutuk.

"Landra," he rasped, "it is the Kaniapiskau. It is my goal. From this point you will be going on alone. Girl, are you hearing me?"

Her stupor held. She made no move or sign. Lips could babble no more, nor eyes open to another spell of hunger and despair.

"Landra!" called Ivan again. "Landra! 'Fore Heffen, you must wake!"

He shook her feebly, but there was no response, and with a cry of alarm he reached into the pocket of the mackinaw coat which he wore under his koolutuk, brought forth the marvel of a piece of pemmican and inserted it between her lips.

Though she did not harken to his cry or hand, the touch of food was the potent elixir that stirred her from her coma. Unconsciously her mouth worked upon it. Her teeth masticated it. It was consumed, and the strength of it immediately passed inward to feed the fires of her system.

THE effect was magical. Landra's lashes opened. She stirred from her stupor and immobility. Compassionate eyes on Ivan, she raised herself on her elbow and painfully got to her knees beside him.

"Oh, my God, Ivan!" she cried agonizingly. "You have sacrificed yourself for me!"

"There was life for only one, Landra," he replied feebly. "It could not be by any manner of being that we should both go through. What I was fearing was that I could not be making the Kaniapiskau, but on God's elbow I have hung, and in the marvelousness of His miracle He has given me my goal. The way down-river lies before you, girl. Chakoni is bound up. How far away I am not knowing, but he is not so far away that he can not reach you if you but keep moving. And here, Landra, is the power to move!"

He drew from his pocket another marvel, more of the pemmican, a large double handful reserved through the days of starvation for this crisis and this ultimate accomplishment, and put it in her hand.

"It is pemmican," he explained, puzzled by her astounded, speechless stare. "You are knowing pemmican whateffer when you are a Northwoman and all. There is essence, concentration there, fiber and fat. Strong nourishment abides in its smallest particle, and piece by piece it will be taking you on. Are you not understanding?"

"Yes, I understand." Landra spoke slowly, eying the meat in a detached way and lost in marveling at the sacrificial greatness of the man. "About the meat I understand. I know pemmican. I have used it often before. But what I do not understand is why you have starved out your

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body and burned up your soul for me; why you have done this incredible thing; why you lie ready to slip back into doom and darkness that I may go on in the light.

"And do you think I am going on—alone? If there is virtue for one in the pemmican, there shall be virtue for two. Do you hear me? My will must make it so. Your will must make it so. And the will of Heaven in the fervency of our faith must make it so. Ivan, we must share it! Eat!"

She thrust a morsel between his lips, but with the strength of fright he caught her arm and pushed it away.

"For why will you be tempting me?" he cried despairingly. "I am not as you. You have had the rest of many days. With a few meals you will walk again. But I—I would be needing many meals. I could eat all yon pemmican you hold, girl, and it would not be winning me a forward step. It would only be fanning the feeble heat within me for as long as the meat lasted."

"Then in the name of Heaven, take it, Ivan! Gain that strength. Here, let me nourish you!"

" 'Fore God, Landra, you will not be wrecking my plans and my heart in the ultimate hour? And are you not reading my heart? It is that your life is more to me than my life, and though you knew it not, it has been so from the first. Yonder on Nachikopi by the side of your dead you came into the grayness of my life like the new sun rising through the Winter's Long Gloom. You came and remained, and I was swearing on Nachikopi, too, that I would follow to the last the example of Tember Clavaire. He martyred himself for a vision and a cause. He died that you might live. And, Landra, can a lover be doing less than a father?"

The beauty, the sublimity of his self-abnegation overwhelmed her. It shook a flood of light into the suffering-darkened recesses of her soul, and with a swift motion she flung the pemmican from her into the snow and flung herself down on the ice again with her head upon Ivan's breast.

"I can not go on alone!" she declared. "I can not go on alone. Wherever the journeying may be, we will seek it together, you and I. Your lips on mine, Ivan, and let it come as it will—the darkness and the cold!"

In the stolen ice-fire of the caress, before he could summon his will to compel her to retrieve the meat, Ivan felt the congealed river surface beneath them begin a faint vibration. He turned his face and peered blindly down-river.

Landra's eyes followed his, and a quarter of a mile away they glimpsed the Nascaupee Chakoni, frost-rimed from head to foot by incessant travel, lying upon a long, low sledge, laden with his outfit and grub sacks as he furiously lashed his dogs toward them.

CHAPTER X

THE MEDICINE OF SPRING

IVAN TREVOR awoke to the familiar drumming of rain upon a roof and the pounding of river surf on bare rock.

The last thing he had been conscious of was himself lying prostrate upon the Kaniapiskau's ice, Landra on her knees beside him and Chakoni hurling his dogs up-river at top speed.

Now he was filled with mystification, for the signs tokened another place and season. Under him he felt a soft-blanketed couch. Over him streaked the huge timbers of a beamed ceiling. He knew he must be in some Northern dwelling, yet he could not reconcile this situation with the camp-fire that glowed dimly in front of him. How could a camp-fire burn within walls? He peered at it, bewildered, and while he peered, a log burst in rifts of ruby coals, and the resulting flame licked across tiers of mortared stones.

Then Ivan knew—knew the fireplace where he was accustomed to sit and smoke, knew the rude mantel above it and the great beams above that. He realized that he must be lying in his council-room in Chimo, and he rose on his elbow and gazed about to assure himself that the rest of his surroundings were the same as of old.

Yes, yonder in the middle of the room stood his long council-table littered with its maps and documents and surrounded by the carved chairs. In one of the chairs huddled a shape, just what shape Ivan could not at first make out. That end of the table was in the shadow, but as the unburned portion of the log continued to catch and the flame to grow, the shape in the chair was bathed in amber light. Ivan recognized the well-known figure of his chief trader sunk in the relaxation of sleep down into the depths of his seat, his arms upon the table and his head upon his arms.

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"Sachelle!" called Ivan in a voice uncertain from long disuse of volume and timbre. "Sachelle!"

Swift as a wild animal wakes and leaps, Sachelle jumped from his chair. He landed erect, his body straight as a spear, upon his moccasins in the middle of the floor and in another jump was at the factor's side.

"Ba gar!" he cried. "You be wake w'ile I'm doze off. I'm sorry, me, but I be t'ank God you be come to at last."

"At last, Sachelle, at last? Man, how long have I been like this?"

"Since Chakoni breeng you down de Kaniapiskau an' de Koksoak on hees sled, you and de girl——"

"Landra!" Ivan broke in impetuously. "She is not the same, now? You are no telling me that?"

"No, she be all right queeck. Sleepin' now 'cause it's after midnight, you be see. She was weak an' so for wan leetle w'ile but not for long. But you—you be different. You sleep; you take de food. Your body she fill out some and your face. De nourishment seem reach de flesh all right, but she ain't touch your mind. You crazy, off your head all de taim. All de end of de Wintaire dere ain't no sign of change, but I be t'ink it is de Spreeng be make it. *Oui*, de hot sun and de sweet Sout' wind is de medicine for you. She be take de frost of de Barrens out your head."

"So it is the Spring, eh?" mused Ivan. "I was hearing the rain and the Koksoak's waves, but I did not know how that could be. To fall asleep in the frozen Barrens and to wake in the melting warmth of Chimo—I was not reconciling those sensations at all. But now I am understanding. I have been crawling through the corridors of Hell, and it is only this moment I am coming back to earth. Sachelle, give me my pipe!"

Sachelle strode 'round the council-table to the farther wall where hung the factor's koolutuk and mackinaw undercoat. From the pocket of the mackinaw he took the tremendous long-stemmed pipe, and returning, felt for the tobacco-pouch upon the mantel and handed pipe and pouch to Ivan.

The latter fingered the pipe lovingly, tapped its bowl upon the stones of the fireplace and filled it with the Company's tobacco.

"It is attar of roses, it is ambrosia, it is the lotus flower!" he sighed rapturously, as the chief trader gave him a flaming splinter from the fire for a light. "Sachelle, were you neffer considering it as a cure? Had you been but starting the funnel smoking, putting the stem between my teeth and inducing me to suck it once, you syne would have seen me wake. Now efferything is clear to me, efferything is sane, efferything is reconciled.

"I can be listening to you, man, to your report of the months that have passed. It is that I have wasted much time in sleep and can not be starting too soon to make it up. But first you will be telling me of yourself. My hopes have been realized. It is a well man I see. But all the same I am fancying we have lain under a common shadow. Though you may not have lain so deep as I, forbye it must have been deep enough. Were you halting there long in the Whale River country?"

"WAN week we be lie at Eraldson Post after we left you dat day," informed Sachelle, drawing forth his own short, black trader's pipe and lighting it and taking a chair to the fire. "De cold she got me hard in de chest here," thumping himself vigorously upon the breast bone. "De pains rack me, an' I speet de blood. Chakoni he would not be travel on for all I curse heem and so."

"Aye, according to my mandate! When Chakoni is commanded, he stays commanded till I speak again. You were not fit, Sachelle, and he would not go on till you were fit. Was it not so?"

"*Oui*, for seven full days we be lie oop dere. We eat, and de dogs eat, and de worst of it was dat I'm know, me, we be eatin' w'at likely you be starvin' for. Den I'm mend some whole lot, an' we get de start for Indian House Lake. On Indian House she blow lak forty storms in wan. Anodder week we be storm-bound dere, den we get de clear travel oop de George Rivaire. She's no way easy travel, but dat Chakoni push on lak wan demon.

"I'm ride all de way, but he slash dem dogs troo all de same. He break trail an' make trail an' haul wit' de huskies, rush dem over de drifts and de jams, workin' hard as wan whole team heeself. De dogs begin give out, an' de faster dey fail, de harder he drive. Wan dog goes down; he cuts de trace an' runs wit' three. Anodder drops. We make de George Rivaire Post wit' two."

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"Fair grand!" ejaculated Ivan, teeth biting hard upon the stem of his pipe as he mentally ran the great Northern highway with Chakoni and Sachelle. "You would be getting fresh animals there."

Sachelle shook his head. "Dat's de bitter bad luck. Dere ain't no dogs dere but de Post-keeper's, an' de Post-keeper is gone out wit' de Eskimos after seals. So Chakoni he lashes on. We kill wan more dog between de George an' de Whale an' we drown de last wan in de Whale."

"Eh, man? You are saying so? The Whale was open?"

"*Oui*, at de mout'. De tide rip dat theek ice in Midwinter joost lak paper. We be catch trouble crossin' her and drown de dog, but we go high oop her w'ere de tide ain't reached and cross her bime-by. We come on to Chimo dogless and so—an' Chakoni, de iron devil, pullin' me on de sled."

Sachelle paused, sucking noisily on his pipe, staring into the fire and shaking his head in an astounded manner.

"Dat Chakoni!" he resumed. "*Mon Dieu!* but he is wan marvel. I'm de total wreck, an' all I'm fit to do is lie by de fire lak de seeck dog an' raise ma head to lap de food an' lie an' sleep some more. But dat Chakoni! 'Stead of de hondreds of miles he's traveled, you'd be t'ink he's joost romped down de Koksoak to Ungava Bay and back. He take not wan minute's rest, but get de fresh team an' mooch food an' lash oop de Koksoak on anodder trail. At de mout' of de Swampy Bay Rivaire he be find you an' camp ba camp an' fire ba fire he breeng you bot' down."

"You would be better by then, Sachelle?"

"*Oui*, I'm on ma feet, me, an' wan good t'ing dat. For dere's enough seeck on de Post. *Mon Dieu*, w'at ghosts, w'at skeletons in de koolutuks, you two! I'm never see anyt'ing lak it, and me, I be see hardship and hunger all ma years. You suffer de starvation.

"You suffer de ulcerated stomach from eatin' so mooch twigs an' bark an' berries w'at must be some kind of poison. You suffer de frost-bite, de snow-blindness, de body-collapse and de nerve shatter and over all de madness of de Barrens. *Saprie*, I'm don't know if dere's anyt'ing you don't be suffer! You wan ravin' maniac, dat's all!"

"Did I speak, Sachelle?" asked Ivan, his breath coming thickly. "Were you hearing me—or understanding?"

"Day an' night you be rave, but dere is no sense. Always it is you an' de girl on de Barrens in de frost an' de snow, in de storm an' de flamin' dark. An' always it is her life before yours an' her name on your lips. Landra! *Mon Dieu!* if I be live wan t'ousand years, I be remember dat name, I'm hear it so often in de seeck watches of de night. But she be never lak you, never so bad. She beginnin' to peeck oop w'en Chakoni get to Chimo wit' her an' after dat she mend ver' queeck."

"And you have seen to her every want and comfort, Sachelle? You have given her the best food and the best room that the Post affords? She will be sleeping upstairs?"

"*Non*, she be sleep in dere!" Sachelle pointed through the open doorway of the half-lit dining-room to another door which led off it. "I'm be have her take Ayume's room."

"Man, are you crazy?" demanded the factor, angrily. "For why have you gone aad given her yon ronion's bunking when there was my own room, clean and spacious, upstairs?"

Gravity, almost gloom, settled upon Sachelle's face, swarthily outlined by the birch logs' glare.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he breathed. "I'm not lak it either, me! But how can we be watch, Chakoni an' me, if she be oopstairs? Wan must sit ba you, an' wan must watch at her door."

"She is ill?"

"*Non, non*, she be well—too well. Well enough to be get away if she tries. She ain't never tried, but we got to watch all de same she don't get de chance."

"In Heffen's name, Sachelle, what will you be driving at? You juggle with riddles, and I am not fathoming you at all. Is the girl a thief that you must set a watch on her, or does danger lurk on the Post threshold to devour her if she crosses?"

The gloom on Sachelle's face deepened, and a hardness came into the lines of his features as he whirled from the fire with his abrupt mannerism and looked into Ivan's eyes.

"Factor, I'm be born in de Nort'. I be know its ways an' power, an' I'm t'ink I'm understand wan leetle bit dat hunger traverse you make from Nachikopi Lake to

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de Kaniapiskau Rivaire. Dat wonderful t'ing, ba gar, dat monster t'ing, an' I'm hate lak poison to be tell you w'at I must. But dat girl you be carry, dat girl you be freeze for an' starve for an' all but die for is belong to—enemies."

"Enemies?" bellowed Ivan in his old trumpet voice.

"Enemies!" repeated Sachelle in a sharp hiss. "Dat's w'y she be sleep dere, an' dat's w'y Chakoni lie ba her door. Ask heem if it ain't. Chakoni," with a piercing stab of his coal-black eyes into the dining-room's half gloom, "Chakoni, be come here!"

Out of the formless dark at the bottom of the bedroom door in the other room the figure of the Nascaupee Fort runner arose and without sound stepped into the light of the council-room fireplace.

"It is so," he corroborated unemotionally and without being questioned. "Factor, we have been blood-brothers through plague and frost and famine and fight, and blood-brothers in the hour of trouble we shall be again. The girl is of the United Fur Company."

CHAPTER XI

THE CHALLENGE OF MONROE

"YOU liar, Chakoni!" roared Ivan Trevor in a mighty wrath. With an abrupt motion he jerked himself from his reclining position to a sitting position, the couch coverings half slipping from him and trailing over his legs as he lowered them to the floor. "And you, Sachelle! Tefflish liars, both of you!"

The chief trader, a grim smile on his face, gazed at him unnettled.

"I'm lak hear dat, me," he observed. "It is your old self dat spiks, an' you must be well. *Oui*, I'm lak your spirit, an' ba gar, if I be gone troo frozen hell for wan girl, I'm soon give de lie to any wan who spik her ill. But all de same dat don't change de facts. De girl is of Monroe's company, de United Fur."

"Your proof, man, your proof! Remember I am not for the infinitesimal slice of a second admitting it, but still I will be demanding proof that I may syne disprove."

"Proof!" ejaculated Sachelle. "*Mon Dieu*, it is here, there, everyw'ere. Chakoni, you be tell heem w'at you be see on de Whale Rivaire."

"It is the end of Winter," began Chakoni, in Cree, squatting in front of the red coals of the fireplace between the other two men and pulling out his thin pipe of stone. "I have come back to the coast from the taking of seals, and none too soon have I come back. So wide and so fast the floe-ice cracks that I am driven ashore. Like the black tongues of sea monsters the new waters lick through the white ice, and the leads open ever bigger and bigger. The floe-ice grinds together. The pack ice runs like a white wolf horde before the wind. The great bergs float like moving mountains. The mouth of the Whale gapes wide and vomits the first flood of Spring."

Chakoni paused in the unconscious eloquence of his language and extended a swarthy finger toward the fire, making motions in the light, drawing the imaginary lines of the coast at the mouth of the Whale.

"It is thus. I am on the eastern shore. Big Island lies off in the Bay. The arm of the sea stretches down for many miles, and riding in on it comes a ship. It is not the Company's ship. *Fortune* I read on her side, and I think it is a sealing ship or one of the ships that make far journeys amid the Northern ice. But I am not sure, and I do not show myself till I am sure. The boats glide ashore, and in the foremost boat is a man who by his face and commands I know to be chief of them all. It is a white man. His white squaw is with him, and when he steps out on the rocks it is a man I know. Factor, it is a man you know. It is the starved, lost man we found upon the Koksoak's bank and brought to you in the Post."

"Channing?" exploded Ivan. "Seton Channing? Her uncle—Landra's uncle?"

"Even so!" nodded Chakoni. "But he is no more a ghost, no more a skeleton covered with sagging skin. He is fat again, and strong. His voice is loud, and it rings like the voice of a man who is born to command. Now he commands, swift and hard and brief, and the men of the ship take axes against the forest trees, and the logs of the Post they build begin to rise before my eyes."

"A Post, Chakoni! 'Fore Heffen, does he dare dispute our trade after us succoring him and all?"

"It was the purpose of his first coming, and before my eyes is the purpose made plain. Yonder rise the logs of the Post, and

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here am I, unseen, in the spruce. Unseen I remain, and unseen I come back to Chimo. That is what I saw at the mouth of the Whale. Factor, does it sound like a lie?"

"No, no, man! Forgie's my hasty word. And you, too, Sachelle, forgie's! It is proof, bitter proof, but I will be having more. Aye, bitter or no, I will be having it all. How are you knowing Channing is of Monroe's company? It may be that he is but a venturesome Free-Trader."

"*Non*, he be of de United Fur," declared Sachelle. "*Saprie*, don't he be come here on Chimo on Chakoni's heels, heem an' some men, to see if Tember Clavaire and hees daughter Landra be safe? He says hees search party dat he organize at Rigolet w'en he sail back on de Company's ship is sent in from Nort'west Rivaire Post to Eraldson Post, but dey find no trace. So he must be come heeself an' see if you be find dem."

"While I was a-bed!" exclaimed Ivan. "Man, it is a mystery his presence was not stirring me from my sickness. You were telling him—all?"

."ONLY as much as he be need know. I'm tell heem dat Tember Clavaire is dead an' dat de girl is safe. But I ain't lettin' heem see her close. You see Chakoni is wit' me, an' hees Whale Rivaire tale is fresh in ma ear. More dan dat, amongst Channing's men I be see wan man of Monroe's company I'm know 'way down in Montreal.

"Channing he spin de explorin' story same as w'en he came first an' claim as de oncle he has de right to see de girl how he lak an' to take her away. But I be slam it in hees teeth dat he is of de United Fur, dat he is Monroe's right-hand man an' dat he be already build wan Post on de Whale Rivaire.

"Den dere is beeg fight along de shore. Hees party be strong all right, but wit' de help of de few Nascaupee fort-runners an' some Eskimos left on de Post we beat dem off at last. An' I be warn heem stay off, an' I be hold de girl for hostage. Next he try for parley an' say dat he have de right to trade an' all he want is to be left in peace an' he also will be keep de peace. An' I sneer in hees face. 'Peace!' I say. 'You be wait till de factor wakes. Den you see how mooch peace you get.' "

"And now I have waked, Sachelle!" growled Ivan ominously. "But is that all the preparations you were making—just waiting?"

"*Non*, I'm not knowing when you be get well, but I be in authority meanw'ile an' I be have de responsibility of de Post. I must conserve de Company's trade an' make de preparations accordingly. So I'm get ready and so to deal wit' dis Channing, joost as if I be de only wan to carry out ma plans. I'm t'ink dat's de best t'ing. If you be well before de blow falls, so mooch de better. De blow fall all de harder. *Saprie*, now she goin' fall mighty hard, an' we be goin' sweep dis *canaille* from de Labrador!"

"Aye, that we are!" boomed the factor, nodding his head with certitude. "That we are, men, and clean!"

"He be have so many men dat I'm forced to send to de odder Posts for help," Sachelle continued. "So I'm start de Nascaupee fort-runners different ways to Nichikun Lake, to de George Rivaire, to Davis Inlet, to Nort'west Rivaire wit' de command in Ivan Trevor's name to rush oop all de force dey can be muster."

"Fair grand!" exclaimed Ivan, reaching out a huge hand to the chief trader. "It is as I would have done. You are a man after my own heart and head, Sachelle, and you have failed not in administration. How soon can we be expecting these reinforcements?"

"Dose Nascaupees go in on de last snows ba sledge, for de rivaires inland still held de ice, you see, w'en all be free at de coast. Dey'll be come back ba canoe, an' dey an' de men of de Posts be here 'round de beginnin' of August."

"Yes," declared Chakoni, "though the way be long, when danger taints the wind the men of the Company travel fast. They go as the wild goose wedge or the osprey in its swoop. When the birches yellow will they gather here from many miles, the men of the Nichikun, the men of Davis Inlet and the men of Northwest River, and we will go forth to meet the men of the George."

"*Oui*," explained Sachelle to the factor, "I'm t'ink it was best for de George Rivaire men to come up de George an' across-country to meet us when we move. Dat was de word I be send, an' meanw'ile dey could be spy an' kip knowledge of de United Post. Was dat de right t'ing?"

"None better, Sachelle. It would not do for them to get caught alone. Channing might be strong enough to crush both sections of a divided force."

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"Thus the rest will gather here," Chakoni resumed. "They will swarm on Chimo, and Chimo will be glad. And before the rivers are sealed again our enemies will fall as the birch leaves fall in the frost."

"Dat is as it must be," nodded the chief trader. "Dat is de need for haste. We must be smash dem quick. Don't give dem any chance for foothold an' extend deir Posts inland. An' we must not give dem de chance to take in de furs of de Summer trade. Dat's de vital point."

"But, man, they will not have had time to work up trade yet," exulted the Factor, "and we will be smiting them before they begin."

"Taim!" grunted Sachelle with a gloomy grimace and shrug. "Dey be have more taim dan you be t'ink. De Barren Ground tribe be gone over to dem already, an' we be stand to lose deir Winter fur."

IVAN leaped from his couch, and Sachelle noted with keen satisfaction that he stood straight and strong without weakness of knee or dizziness of brain.

"The Chimo tribe?" he demanded in a thunderous voice. "*My* tribe?"

"*Oui*," grunted Sachelle again. "Dey be take our debt in de Fall, you remember? You be give it to dem yourself. An' w'en de United Fur Company appears, w'at do dose *canailles* do but go away wit' our debt for sell deir furs to Channing! Now how I be know dat? I'm afraid of it in de first place, an' w'en wan of de George Rivaire spies come on Chimo to tell me how t'ings go on de Whale, I be send heem oop to dose Nascaupees' huntin'-grounds. But dey ain't dere, an' he be trace dem by deir camps to de Whale an' come again an' tell me."

"'Fore Heffen, the hound will be paying for that!" threatened Ivan. "The tribe, Chimo's tribe, *my* tribe! This man I was bedding and doctoring and giving free passage to will be stealing the chosen of my people? Is he a teffle, Sachelle, or is it that his cranium is cracked and he has bowed down before the false god of power? Aye, it must be that the man is crazed. I am not fathoming it any other way. Such ingratitude, such duplicity, such brazenness! He is surely fey or drunk with dreams."

"I'm don't know about dat. He act de pretty wise man an' bold in all I see of heem, an' he be cunnin' enough to understand he can win de tribe troo wan single wan of de tribe."

"Ayume, eh?" guessed Ivan with the light of intuition. "You are saying——"

"De day Chakoni breeng in de news from de Whale, she be gone from Chimo Post. An' w'en de George Rivaire spy come to me he be see her in de tepees of de tribe around de Post. He be see her an' dis man Channing theeck as honey."

"The tefflish ronion! And what about Channing's own wife?"

"De George Rivaire spy be see her walk about in de stockade yard w'en de gate be open, but she never come out."

"And well she may be staying in, if her husband herds with the Nascaupees! I am seeing it plain. I am seeing it cruelly plain. Ayume sways the tribe, and Channing sways Ayume. Therefore Channing sways the tribe. God preserve's, there has been double treason in the Post the while I pampered the plotters. And you two alone are true!"

Ivan, gigantic as a bear in his couch-robe, stepped up to the two in front of the fireplace and laid a paw on the shoulder of each.

"For why are you true?" he bellowed with astounding vehemence, as his blazing eyes fathomed theirs. "I was a sick man and broken. The Post was easy to flee, and power and profit tempted on the Whale. For why are you true? For why are you not going the way of Ayume and her tribe?"

"Me, I'm stand wit' de Company," spoke Sachelle without hesitation. "An' s'pose dere ain't no Company, I'm stand wit' you. I'm hold in ma heart de pride of service, de oath of allegiance, de bond of loyalty. An' s'pose I ain't be hold any of dose t'ings, I'm still hold in ma mind dat moment beyond Eraldson Lake w'en you be go alone on de Barrens dat I may be go back to de Post!"

"And you and I, factor," declared Chakoni, in the momentary silence that fell, "have been blood-brothers through all. Is there a stronger tie than that, or words for a truer vow?"

A tenderness mellowed the blaze of the factor's eyes, and his fingers slipped down the men's arms and closed on their hands.

"'Fore God!" he murmured, "it is worth the loss of two hundred false to find a steadfast pair. Now leave me, both of you, and send me in the girl!"

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CHAPTER XII

THE FETTERS OF ALLEGIANCE

SWIFTLY the factor stirred the birch logs of the fireplace into flame, touched to the flame the wicks of two candles that stood upon the mantel and set them back in their sticks. By their yellow light he sought out the rest of his clothes, hanging on the pegs beside his mackinaw coat and koolutuk, and feverishly began to draw them on.

While he dressed himself, he revolved in his mind the things he had been told, and there arose again the scene of Channing's coming to Chimo upon the night he had dined the officers of the Company's ship. Again Ivan felt himself, port glass in hand, standing at the head of the table proposing his toast to the venturesome, to the farfarers, to the spoilsmen of the North, and turning to glare upon Ayume and her rabble interrupting the feast. Again he saw the sodden, ragged skeleton in Chakoni's and the other Nascaupees' hands, and phase by phase he recalled Channing's resuscitation.

Also he visioned the geographical details of Channing's overland traverse, and knew that the purpose of it had been but blazing lines of travel to, and projecting suitable sites for, a chain of inland Posts. The fulfilment of the purpose had come in the establishment of headquarters at the mouth of the Whale, and Ivan was shaken with a mighty indignation at Seton Channing, who, in the face of friendship and hospitality, had so brazenly challenged his power.

And his indignation was aroused not alone at Seton Channing, but at all Monroe's hirelings—at Channing's brother-in-law, Tember Clavaire, dead in his log tomb on far Nachikopi, and when he thought of Landra herself, his indignation was the indignation of despair.

The Labrador was his country, his sovereign realm, and it hurt him inexpressibly to discover her in the midst of a conspiracy to wrest it from him.

He finished his dressing and walked heavily across the room to his council-table. There he dropped into one of the great, carved chairs arrayed around its sides and, drawing toward him a map of the Labrador, began to scan the Whale River country. But he had hardly commenced to run a calculating finger up the river's broad estuary when the door of the council-room opened and Landra stepped into the glow of the fireplace and the candles.

If the information that she belonged to the United Fur Company was a staggering blow to the factor, the sight of her now, in the health of her flesh, was one more staggering. The wan, starved face was gone, and the frost-smirch and the snow-blindness and the suffering. Discarded were the furs and the koolutuk that he had come to associate inseparably with her.

SHE stood in Summer gear, in skirt and short-sleeved blouse of light cloth which was one in color with the brown waves of her low-hanging, unbound hair. Though still seeming to retain her full height, she had gained with it her original fulness of body, and the swell of her forearms and neck from the openings of the loose blouse was a revelation to Ivan.

" 'Fore Heffen, girl!" he cried out, and caught himself up short. "But stop! How could I be imagining you would still be thin? And the dress! An apex fool I am to be looking for you in leggings and koolutuk in Spring."

"It is from the store," explained Landra, coming forward, "it and the needle and thread."

"Aye, and the architecture's in you, and fair grand the planning! Sit down, Landra, on your side, there, and spare me a word."

Ivan leaned across the council-table where she sat and took her hands in his, and at the touch his resentment and despair vanished as swiftly as they had surged through his being at his chief trader's news. He mellowed and grew tender, for uppermost in his mind flashed the recollection of that moment at the Swampy Bay River's mouth when she had refused to live through his sacrifice and had thrown the pemmican in the snow.

"A word is all I am wanting, Landra. It is a boorish thing to be routing you out of your bed and forbys, now I am looking into your eyes, a needless thing. But still that you are sitting here I will be having the word and knowing that Sachelle but labored under a delusion. Girl, speak the truth from the depths of your soul and tell me that at heart you are not with the United Fur people!"

The steady gray eyes Ivan looked into

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grew less steady and became suffused with moisture. The warm fingers tightened on his huge hands, and her speech caught once or twice in her throat before the words would come.

"Ivan," she faltered, "this is the moment I have expected and—dreaded. I knew it was coming. I knew the day would arrive when you must awake and listen to your men and then ask me this. But I had to stay to hear you ask and to answer. Otherwise I could have stolen away. At least I think I could have stolen away, and if I couldn't have, why, my uncle's followers would have battered down the Post and taken me. I am sure they could have done it, for the force here was not overstrong, Yet I would not have it so.

"Sachelle let me talk to him at a distance, he in the yard and I in the door of the Post, and I bade him leave things as they were till he heard from me, for I had to stay. So I stayed, much of the time with you, to answer in your own ears, in order that you might understand."

"And your answer, Landra?"

"Is that I am heart and soul with the United Fur Company, with the Company of my father and the Company of my mother's brother. It hurts me to tell you this, but I know that you will understand."

"Understand? That I do. The loss of my people and my trade sits heavily on me, and the only comfort in the calamity is the loyalty of Chakoni and Sachelle. Two faithfuls I was thinking to make three faithfuls, but it is plain that I misjudged. Aye, I understand."

"But you don't, Ivan!" cried Landra impetuously. "You think I'm against you. I'm not. It is only your Company our Company competes with. The principle holds in it and not the person. As an adherent of the United Fur I am of course to be counted as against the Hudson's Bay Company, but I, Landra Clavaire, am not against you, Ivan Trevor."

"Who is not for me is against me," declaimed Ivan, with a returning surge of indignation. "There is no middle attitude. Landra, are you telling me you will cleave to these tefflish plotters and leave me to the solace of Chakoni and Sachelle?"

"I must," she replied tremulously, but with conviction.

"Then your troth of the Barrens was a sham and a lie!" he accused vehemently. "'Fore God, girl, are you remembering that hour? I am seeing you now, prone on the Kaniapiskau's ice, with your head upon my breast, and the life-giving meat scattered upon the crust. I am hearing your very words. 'I can not be going on alone!' you cried. 'I can not be going on alone. Whereffer the journeying may be, we will be seeking it together, you and I. Your lips on mine, Ivan, and let it come as it will—the darkness and the cold!' In that moment you gave yourself to me whereffer my paths might lead, and now you are renouncing me and my paths for the allegiance to Monroe's scheming whelps. Your words were a sham and a lie, I am saying, and the shadow of truth was not in them!"

"It was!" defended Landra, her breast heaving and the color pulsing and spraying in her excited face. "It was, Ivan. No truer words were ever spoken. What you forget is the time and place they were spoken. Yonder between the waste of snow below and the waste of fire above, we were outside ties or allegiance or kinship of any sort.

"But here things are different. The normal world lays its hands on us, and we are answerable to it. In that moment, at the Swampy Bay River's mouth, where it seemed that the wayfaring was nowhere but to death, I was content to go hand in hand and heart to heart with you. I would be content, where the wayfaring points now to life, to do the same still if I could, but I can't. Here in life, ourselves should be the last things to think of. We are under ties and allegiance and kinship again, and upon me they bind very strong."

"Stronger than your love?"

Landra crimsoned to the white neck that swelled so luxuriously out of the sailor blouse, and her hands, which Ivan gradually released, played uncertainly with the map of Labrador upon the table.

"That is a hard question, Ivan, a cruel way of putting it. I don't know if I could answer that fairly, and I am not going to try. But I will say this: They were here before my love. These bonds existed before."

"And for why am I forswearing mine? Am I not going beyond these same bonds that you are mentioning to take you into Chimo and into my life for good and all?"

"Yes, but you are renouncing nothing. There's the point, and there's the difference.

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Ivan, could you not give a little of what you are asking?"

Ivan gazed uncomprehendingly into the questioning gray eyes.

"Give? Asking?" he murmured slowly. "I am not fathoming you at all. What would I be giving?"

"What you are asking me to give. Will you not renounce a little, or at least relax? The Labrador is large. The trade is great. Districts could be arranged and division made so that there would be no friction or even competition between you and my uncle, There is revenue enough for two, and if the United Fur Company gets its share, I need never leave the Post of Chimo."

THE factor's half-bent figure stiffened. His face hardened. His colossal shoulders set with an aggressive shrug, and his fist crashed down upon the table like a mallet.

"Treason!" he exploded. "Treason, Landra, is what you are offering me. For why did I fight the last of the Northwesters? For why have I fallen like hurricane, fire and pestilence upon Free Traders who have crossed my path? To let Monroe's company halve the Labrador with me? Girl, I am telling you the Hudson's Bay Company's blood-red banner is as was the cross of St. George to me. Chimo is as was far Glenelg, and the Labrador as was bonny Inverness. Not in aspect, you'll mind, but in preciousness!

"The Company's interests are my interests. Its prestige is my prestige. Its honor is my honor. . . . And mighty as is the temptation and sweet as is the seduction you are offering, Landra, I will be consigning the thought of treachery to tefflish perdition!"

"Yet you wonder why I do not do the very thing you refuse to do!" Landra sent back. "One desertion is as easy as the other. In fact yours is easier, for there is no blood-tie to bind you. My father spent his life with the United Fur, and I have no cause to love the Hudson's Bay. They gave us a bitter fight and no quarter at Lac la Biche, and the persecution is fresh in my mind. My father died carrying out their plans, yet the plans go through just the same, and the blood-tie still holds.

"I have my Uncle Seton and my Aunt Undine Channing to think of. Ivan, can't you see it in that light? Won't you unbend and make some compromise?"

"I will be making no compromise whateffer with the enemies of my Company!" boomed Ivan, pounding the table for every word. "And I will be fighting them, one and all, to the acid end!"

"Then I make no compromise with the enemies of mine!" flashed Landra proudly. "I'm going back at once to the Whale River Post, and I tell you plainly that there you will find us resisting, one and all, to the acid end!"

The old mellowness tempered the blaze of Ivan's eyes. With all his mighty strength he reached forth and suddenly lifted Landra by the shoulders over the table so that she was half-sitting upon its edge, half-lying against his breast.

"I was loving you from the first," he breathed, "but I was neffer loving you better than at this moment in the heat of your defiance. And are you not knowing, girl, that you are hostage and spoil of war in the hands of the enemy? If I but give the mandate, you will be staying in Chimo and neffer seeing the Whale River Post."

"I know," admitted Landra, her heart leaping furiously against his, but her eyes looking at him unwaveringly. "But, Ivan, though you swept the United Fur men into Ungava Bay and razed their Post to the rocks, it would be to you no victory."

"Then, by Heffen, you shall go back!" blazed Ivan, thrusting her toward the door. "It is the dawn hour, and you shall go back. Chakoni and Sachelle shall free you at the Whale. And there on the Whale you will be seeing me again. I will sweep the United Fur men into Ungava Bay. I will raze their Post to the rocks. Aye, and over the crumbling palisades I will come and take you, and 'fore the God that looked down on us two alone in the Barrens, I will make it a victory!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRUCE

SUMMER, that is scarcely to be differentiated from Spring in the high Northland, rushed upon Chimo with its hot embrace. The river ice had gone out on the heels of the arctic pack ice and the Titan floods upon the heels of both before Ivan Trevor had arisen out of his sickness, and hardly had the ice and snow vanished when

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the leafags of grass, shrub and tree painted the land with chrysoprase green.

True, the bare sand ridges and the barren crags at first retained grim suggestions of Winter's intense desolation, but with the progression of the days this grimness was modified and assuaged. July's fierce sunlight smote the ridges, sending forth quivering heat waves and ever-changing colors, while even the barren rocks clothed themselves with vivid mosses and found vantage somehow in cranny and ledge and pocket for the roots of stunted shrubbery.

So swift the growth had come that Ivan had actually seen the leaves and grasses move in their leap to maturity. He had seen the flowers blaze and the berries redden and marked the wild cotton pennons open on the wind.

This was the respite men and animals ever got in their conflict with the North, the truce in the eternal warfare it waged against their aggression, and to Ivan the brief Summer space seemed strangely symbolical. For now, too, was the period of truce with his enemies on the Whale before he marshaled his forces to smite them as Winter would smite the Labrador.

Yet though the truce to all was inestimably short, the factor found it irritatingly long. He chafed under the inaction of those incensed weeks when the Long Night ruled no more and the Northern days took back the radiant hours that had been stolen from them under the tyranny of frost. Mentally he projected himself with the fort-runners Sachelle had despatched on the last snows to the other Posts, and over and over again he journeyed in his mind the melting Barrens and the breaking rivers they rode.

Sachelle himself and the Nascaupee Chakoni were absent from Chimo, spying in conjunction with the secret agents of the George River Post upon the doings of the United Fur men on the Whale and watching for something Ivan Trevor had bade them watch for.

The Eskimos had gone coastward for the fishing, and Ivan brooded alone in the lonely Post. Through and through its solitary, hollow-sounding buildings and out upon the Koksoak's bank he paced by day, and at night threw himself on the couch by his fireplace or slouched down into one of the carved chairs in the council-room.

The nights were extremely short. He slept but little. Incessantly he smoked, consuming enormous quantities of tobacco in the great pipe which hardly ever left his lips and which in the hour of his isolation was a companion almost animate. And together with his pipe he continually drew comfort from his Proverbs.

Whether he walked with Solomon by the river or mused with him under the candles in the Post, Solomon's wisdom and philosophy was his and applicable to the immediate situation. The words underscored so heavily in red ink took on deeper significance and allusion, and were an inspiration and a prop.

Still, so mighty was the strength of the man and so fiery his spirit that these solaces could not leave him altogether passive, resigned to await unchafing the hour of chastisement. He yearned to hasten that hour, for the entry of Seton Channing into the Labrador and the first, swift success that intrigue had won him was a tremendous blow to his pride.

Over a realm containing thousands of square miles, extending from Hudson's Bay on the west to the Atlantic on the east, and from Hudson's Strait on the north to the Quebec boundary on the south, he had ruled supreme. He had conserved his kingdom for his Company against all comers—not always easily, it was true, but efficaciously—and though misfortune had more than once attended his expeditions, he had never rested under such stigma as he rested under now.

For here was an enemy bold enough not to gamble in petty encroachments upon the distant outskirts of the Hudson's Bay Company's precincts but to put the stake of the whole country to issue at once by challenging trade at the headquarters of the district and throwing up a rival Post.

Already the allegiance of a whole tribe had been severed. This was a disastrous stroke, disastrous enough in itself, but even more disastrous in its political effect upon the other Indian tribes. They were always given to hard bargaining, to trickery and to artifice to obtain the last fraction of value and of overvalue for their furs. The United Fur Company was beyond a doubt at the present moment holding out tremendous inducements to these tribes and offering more "skins" per pelt than the pelts could possibly be worth.

It was a reckless, but at the same time an

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effective policy. It would be carried out so as to disccurage competition and draw to them in the end the whole of the Northland trade. Later on, of course, the scale of prices would drop, but the aim would be accomplished and the United well repaid in adherents for the outlay expended.

Into this competition Ivan was wise enough to see that the Hudson's Bay Company could not plunge. He had used such means of driving others out of the country, raising their advanced prices notch by notch till they faced financial ruin and were compelled to withdraw, but against the United Fur Company it would be useless.

Monroe, a man of millions, was behind the company. He could stand advances as long as could the Hudson's Bay Company, and a mad orgy of price-raising would be infinitely detrimental both to the Hudson's Bay coffers and to future dealing with the tribes.

THEREFORE the means of smashing the United Fur must be force. They had come by force of numbers, and by force of numbers Ivan swore they should go, and the fact that it was his chosen Nascaupees, his Chimo people who had been seduced first and seduced from Chimo's very doors confirmed him in his resolution.

It rankled deeply, the loss of his nearest tribe. Had it been the Nascaupees of Indian House Lake, the men of Manuan Lake or some other distant tribe, it would not have bitten him so. He could have looked on that with grim passivity and awaited with philosophic calm the moment to strike the blow of retaliation. But this outrage angered him beyond all measure, and joint offender with Seton Channing he held Ayume who had made possible its accomplishment.

Now that he recalled her actions, they were suspicious from the first, had he but had the shrewdness to read. Unceasingly he censured himself for his blindness. Here in this very Post above the council-room he sat in, in his own bedroom upstairs, he could have nipped Channing's project in its inception had his wits been keen. Three days and four nights the whelp had lain in his, the factor's bed, simulating incoherency and deceiving both him and Surgeon Ballard.

And the deception had not commenced there. Ivan knew now that Ballard had been wrong in his diagnosis of Channing's condition as the latter lay that night of the Post banquet amid the china and the silver. Ballard had been wrong, and he himself had been right. Channing had but collapsed. There had been no real delirium on top of the collapse. There had been only pretense to avoid further questioning until some satisfactory story could be concocted and some plan of action formulated.

Three days and four nights Channing had conspired with the susceptible Ayume, and the depth of the susceptibility Ivan could vaguely gauge when he remembered Ayume's jealousy at Channing's inadvertent mention of his white wife left behind in Rigolet.

What a capable actor the scoundrel had been, and how well he had carried it off! To Ivan's expression of surprise at the swift knowledge of the Nascaupee girl's name the factor recalled the brazenness of his answer: "Of course! Hasn't she a tongue and English such as it is? She has told me the manner of my coming four nights ago and what followed since."

But it was not the manner of his coming to what subsequently transpired that she told him. It was everything connected with Chimo, the Labrador and the Hudson's Bay Company's trade. The sum of the many secrets Ayume could tell made a budget of information invaluable to any who planned to launch forth in the Northern empire, and Ivan cursed her for the looseness of tongue which the foolishness of her untamed heart had caused. Also he cursed her for her unfathomability, for in her own way she had been as inscrutable an actor as Seton Channing. On the Koksoak's bank he saw her again at the moment of Channing's sailing upon the Company's ship, turning definatly on him when he reprimanded her for her show of emotion.

Again he heard her spitting out her quick Cree gutturals: "He comes again. Even as the South wind comes in Spring he comes, and he will rest under my eyes." Once more he glimpsed her walking across the bare rocks in the direction of the Post and looking back over her shoulder, the flash of Buddhistic wisdom strong in her eyes and the witch-power of prophecy incontestably stamped upon her face, glimpsed her embracing the Nascaupees first with her glance, dwelling and brooding upon them and then sweeping on to him with the

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words. "Ayume goes. Ayume perhaps farther than you think. But still the Lost One comes as the South wind comes in Spring, and the day he comes will be an evil day for Chimo!"

"Aye, an evil day for Chimo!" murmured Ivan aloud to the beams of the lonely council-room where he brooded. "She told me so to my face, and because she told me to my face I was too dull to have belief. She is a teffle, yon Ayume. She communes with the teffle, and she has sold herself body and soul to the teffle's agent, Seton Channing."

His eyes absently fixed through the open window of the council-room upon the August sunlight that bathed the hills above the Post, he pondered upon the black witch-magic which had ever been Ayume's gift; and more than anything else the settling of the responsibility on her and her sorcery brought him solace and eased the smart of his wounded pride.

Ayume's straight-mouthed, flat-nosed, wooden face vanished from his vision. In its place amid the hazy sunlight arose the sweetly molded, gray-eyed face of Landra, with its wealth of color in cheeks, lips and hair, and over the very spot upon the hills where his eyes were dreamily focussed upon her eyes, like messengers from her, broke two figures which were not the stuff of dreams.

THEY swung down with the long stride of Northmen, and Ivan suddenly came back to material things and sat up in his chair and stared through the open window at the approaching two. In the lead he recognized the lithe figure of his Nascaupee Fort runner Chakoni and behind him the heavier-built Sachelle. They lurched into a run as they rounded the Post, flashed past the window and appeared on the threshold before the factor had time to rise from his chair.

"Chakoni! Sachelle!" he cried out eagerly. "You have news from the Whale. You have the news I want or you would not be coming like this."

"*Oui*," panted Sachelle, "de ship is come dere."

"The United Fur ship?" demanded Ivan. "The same ship Chakoni saw?"

"The same ship that I saw," asserted Chakoni. "*Fortune* I read then on her side, and *Fortune* I read now. She went South in the Spring, but it is time for the Summer visit, so she came again, factor, even as you expected."

"Fair grand, men! You have neffer carried better or more weightier news. It is the move I was looking for, and the counter-move is under my hand. In the ears of Heffen I am hoping my retainers are not delayed. If they were but here this mom——"

Ivan paused abruptly and turned an ear to the open window.

"'Fore God!" he exclaimed. "What am I hearing? Is it voices, or is it but the pounding of my ear-drums?"

The chief trader gave a leap to the window and swung his body half over the sill.

"*Mon Dieu*," he shrieked, swinging back again and plunging for the door, "it is singin', de singin' of brigades!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE MARSHALING

HARD on the heels of the chief trader rushed Chakoni and the factor. They sped across the yard and down the lane of palings to the Koksoak's landing, and there they pulled up, breathless, tense, staring up-river as animals stare for unseen danger, their nostrils wide and their ears straining to catch every sound.

The river surface rippled undisturbed as far as their eyes could reach, but their hearing traveled beyond their vision, and they caught the rhythm of the song. Rendered faint by distance it vibrated, but the evenness of its rise and fall betokened a chorus of great volume. In the chorus the men's trained ears recognized different dialects, the musical ring of Indian voices chanting in unison with the tones of whites in a wild diapason that echoed and re-echoed along the barren shores.

"De brigades, as I'm say!" gasped Sachelle.

"Listen!" commanded the factor. "There must be many of them by the sound. And is it not the Company's song I am hearing?"

Again they listened, and nearer at hand the deep booming of the white voices outvolumed the chanting in Cree and broke clear in the familiar words:

> The great grim God of the wilderness has called us to toil and serve
> Where the Northern Light flares red and white o'er the desolate world-roof's curve.

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We are the men who must starve and strive, to fail only when we die,
With our hearts of steel that love and feel though we're bred 'neath an Arctic sky.

The Danger Trail has no fears for us nor even the Barren Grounds,
Nor the Ragged Lands with their pagan bands, nor the crush of the ice-locked Sounds.
When men were cast was the dross of fear thrown out of our human mold,
For the North will bind but her own kind and call but the strong and bold.

Came a pause while the listeners mentally spaced a dozen paddle-strokes, and then the chorus swelled louder still:

O'er endless crust do our raquettes skim; we toy with eternal miles;
And the camp-fire's coal marks each day's goal where the pipe or the tale beguiles.
The land is waste, and the land is wild; the flame of the Night is red;
In a couch of snow we huddle low; and we sleep like the silent dead.

Our Company is our faith and trust; Lo, we are its sons for aye!
And we reap its worth from savage Earth, while we hold bitter foes at bay.
From North to South and from East to West we fare at its grim command,
And we plant its flag on clay or crag through the wilds of the vast Northland.

Again a pause, while Ivan's eyes glowed and his body trembled with ecstasy, and then the final verse rang out in quickened time and a crescendo burst of sound:

No weaklings live in the mighty North where Death hunts in Dark or Sun,
Where the years have spawned, the midnights dawned with never a kindly one;
The land's strange spell grips strong and hard, the Flame and the Snow its sign,
For the Northern breed they starve and bleed, and they die without wail or whine.

AND swift upon the last note of the song the singers burst into view round a rock projection on the Koksoak's bank. Shooting through the water in long leaps, a six-fathom fur canoe came down the Chimo shore. It was manned by a dozen paddlers whose lifted blades flashed like steel shields in the sun, flashed and faded as they dipped again, sending the water boiling away in circular eddies.

From the bow of the big craft flew a shower of spray, caught up by the wind from Ungava Bay and swept back upon the crew, drenching them continually with a white mist. After the first canoe plunged another and another and another, and after these, as swift as a pack of wolves loping in single file, appeared yet others, each straining like an animate thing with the double row of paddles glinting along its sides and the spume clouding up over its bow.

On and on the whole brigade, merged of all the smaller brigades, glided, slipping faster and faster till the eye could hardly catch the forward shift of the arms for the stroke or count the paddle flips at the end.

They neared the landing, directed their course toward it, and as they swerved in, the sun lighted up the yellow sides of the birch canoes like sheets of beaten gold. Bronze statues above the beaten gold poised the paddlers, naked to the waist for speed in that last mad spurt, and the white men, wind-tanned and sun-smoked, were hardly to be distinguished from their tawnier brethren.

Here and there was a glint of color, the neck scarf of a gay half-breed, the scarlet shirt of a perspiring voyageur sagging on his hips, the bright brow fillet of a Nascaupee Indian, but for the most part gaudy costume, so dear to the Northern tribes, had been sacrificed to facilitate muscle action. They threw their whole weight upon the paddles, and the great curved bows of the canoes, carrying the standing bowsmen, hovered between water and sky.

Within a canoe's length of the landing the steersmen with cunning thrusts of their blades took advantage of the swift momentum to whirl the crafts broadside on, and instantly the crews dashed in their paddles in the powerful back-watering stroke.

With a protesting lurch and wriggle the canoes stopped dead in their flight. The surge that swung undulating across the river tossed them light as leaves against the landing. The crews sprang nimbly ashore, and light as leaves the crafts were flicked from water to bank.

In a long line the yellow canoes lay drawn up, the express trains of the wilderness, and by these their passengers had reached their destination. A brawny motley horde they swarmed over the landing and the Koksoak's rocks, and the barren rocks suddenly lost their barrenness, the silent, empty river its silence and its emptiness. Its shores were filled with life and laughter, with movement and color and tumult, and the factor, as he gazed enraptured upon the magic transformation was momentarily

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smitten with humiliation at the selfishness of his waiting days.

He had had nothing to do in Chimo but wait and plan his stroke upon the hour of their arrival, and he had been unable to do it in patience, without restlessness or chafing.

And what of the patience of these men who foregathered on Chimo's shore?

Here were men from Manuan Lake who had come across that country, across the Nachikopi, across the Big Beaver, down the Nachikapau River, through Kanachakagamau, down the Swampy Bay River, down the Kaniapiskau and on down the Koksoak. Yonder were other men from more distant Davis Inlet, on the Atlantic coast, who had crossed the Barren Grounds River, taken the Portage Route which connected with Indian House Lake near its southernmost end, reached Manuan Lake from Indian House and followed the same trail as the Manuan men. Over there were more men who had come farther than that, from Nichikun Lake, down almost on the Quebec boundary, and who had crossed the Big River and threaded Eagle Lake, Male Otter Lake and Kaniapiskau Lake to reach the main traveled highway of the Kaniapiskau River.

And farthest farers of all were the men of Northwest River Post away to the south and east upon Lake Melville. These had traversed the whole peninsula of the Labrador, working up the Hamilton River as far as Grand Falls and going over the Height of Land through Jacopie, Flour, Sandgirt, Birch, Dyke and Petitsikapau Lakes to strike the Goodwood River, a branch of the Kaniapiskau.

These all had converged from different starting-points on a concentration camp at the junction of the Swampy Bay River and the Kaniapiskau and come on in a solid brigade to Chimo.

And, Ivan asked himself, what of the patience of these men? What of their weeks on end of journeying through forest and swamp, river and lake, rapids and portage? What of the deaths they dared, the storms they faced, the white-water they ran, the purgatory of heat, flies and mosquitoes they endured? They had traversed hundreds of miles to strike a single blow at the end of the traverse.

Their patience, the unfaltering, methodical, ineffaceable patience of the Northman had been with them always, and the vision of their cause and service always before their eyes. So they had come with their muscles straining in the final race and their huge lungs roaring aloud:

> The great grim god of the wilderness has called us to toil and serve
> Where the Northern Light flares red and white o'er the desolate world-roof's curve.
> We are the men who must starve and strive, to fail only when we die,
> With our hearts of steel that love and feel though we're bred 'neath an Arctic sky.

Ivan was humiliated; more, he was shamed that he could not have bided his time in the ponderous certitude that invested the brooding, nirvanic North and these native sons of the North. For the moment he had let the injury to his personal feelings overshadow the injury to the Company he served.

He, like Seton Channing, had been a little drunken with power and prone to forget that he was but a representative of a gigantic institution and that it was the institution that mattered and not his personal pride or love. Pride, love, life—what were they against the stake of the Company's good?

He had forgotten, and he had chafed against delay in reparation, but here was a mighty lesson in self-sacrifice, in service and in patience. His heart went out to them, to these far-farers, to these his subjects whom he ruled not for his own profit and power, but for the Company's empery. He threw to the Ungava winds the dignity and reserve that had always characterized his dealings with the underlings, and he plunged into the rabble advancing from the water's edge, shaking the hands of them all, low caste and high caste, Post-keeper and trapper, white men, voyageurs, mètis, quarter-breeds, Eskimos, Nascaupees, Montagnais and the vagrant sprinkling of Iroquois, Crees and Ojibways.

" 'Fore Heffen, men!" he cried. "It is a grand moment to have lived for! God be thankit I have seen you come like this at the Company's call. Forbye it may be that the United Fur's intrusion is a blessing in disguise to bring me the precious panorama. Now when I look on you I am not sorry that Seton Channing built his Whale River Post. But the Post! And Channing! It is they you have come to smite, and losh! but the fight must have been brewing in you all

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these weeks. But neffer fear, I will be leading you into it. On the rush I will be leading you into it. Bring your arms up and get fresh supplies and ammunition at the store. We are leaving for the Whale this darting minute."

Up the lane of palings stalked the huge, erect figure of the factor. Behind him came Sachelle and Chakoni, the two faithfuls in the hour of corruption who were reaping a reward no less than Ivan's, and behind them in a solid array marched the three hundred and fifty-odd lieges of the Hudson's Bay.

The factor had read them well. Though they had exercised infinite patience, the desire to accomplish their end had been unconsciously growing greater within them all the time, and now that their journey was finished and they were under Ivan's leadership they wished for nothing so much as to come to immediate grapples with the foe upon the Whale.

Eyes gleaming in anticipation of the conflict, their hearts leaping joyously, they marched up to the Post, and as they marched they rolled forth their thunderous song:

No weaklings live in the mighty North where
Death hunts in Dark or Sun,
Where the years have spawned, the midnights
dawned with never a kindly one.
The land's strange spell grips strong and hard, the
Flame and the Snow its sign,
For the Northern breed they starve and bleed,
and they die without wail or whine.

CHAPTER XV

THE AMBUSCADE

IVAN expected that his advance to the Whale River would be uncontested. He knew that the spies of the United Fur Company would be keeping Seton Channing well informed as to the Hudson's Bay men's movements, but he doubted that Channing was strongly enough established on the coast to conduct an offensive stroke.

According to the factor's reasoning, Monroe's leader had nothing to gain and everything to lose by meeting the oncoming Chimo force in pitched battle, and therefore it seemed certain that he would elect to make his stand within his own palisades.

Nevertheless Ivan was courting no chance of an ambuscade as he moved his force forward by night to effect a junction on the Whale with the men of the George River Post under Eduldund. He had his scouts out ahead, and these, falling back as the force approached the river, reported the crossing clear.

Immediately several long, light fur canoes, carried with them for the ferrying, were brought from the rear, and into these Ivan told off his men a dozen at a time.

Like flitting wraiths they moved without sound, stepping out of the forest on one shore, gliding swiftly across the black star-strewn water and disappearing into the forest upon the other.

The point of rendezvous settled upon with the George River men lay a quarter of a mile upstream where a shallow valley, dry bed of some ancient tributary, came down to meet the basin of the Whale, and still maintaining the utmost caution the Chimo men threaded the spruce and larch toward it.

The scouts were once more out ahead. Ivan, Sachelle and Chakoni were looking after the discipline of the ranks, alert to check word of conversation or undue noise of movement. They had worked close up to the rendezvous and were listening tensely for the signal call of the scouts and the counter-cry of Eduldund, the George River Post-keeper, when hard ahead shrilled a Nascaupee curse and a rifle belched fire in the dark.

And instantaneously with that first report came a thunderous volley, splitting the forest gloom with wicked stabs of flame, and echoing and re-echoing among the serried trunks of the spruce.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Sachelle in Ivan's ear. "W'at be happen dere?"

"Down flat, men!" roared Ivan. "Down flat! It will be the tefflish United Fur whelps. They have got between Eduldund and me. And forbye they may rue it. Be looking well to your arms. If they choose to fight to a finish in the open, so much the better for us!"

Squirming amongst the undergrowth, taking what cover they could behind tree-trunks, logs, stumps and boulders, the Hudson's Bay men hugged the earth. For the most part the fire of their enemies passed high overhead, but now and then a groan or an imprecation among Ivan's retainers told that a ball had gone low. They replied to the attack with vicious fusillades, the rapidity and volume of which seemed to

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smother the offensive fire, for soon the latter died out to desultory reports and finally to total silence.

"Ba gar!" breathed Sachelle, as he blew at his smoking rifle. "W'at dey meanin' now? Some ruse, *saprie?*"

"I am not knowing," returned Ivan. "But the force will be lying close till we throw out again the pickets they drove in on us."

"Let the pickets stay, factor," counseled Chakoni. "They will go forward firing and learn nothing. This work requires a spy, and Chakoni is the proven one. Let me go to see."

"But I am not wanting you killed," objected Ivan, hesitating to give his assent. "I would rather lose a score of pickets than lose you."

"The men of the United Fur will never see me," Chakoni asserted. "I will go as softly as the osprey through the air or the namaycush in the waters of the stream."

"Go then," assented Ivan. "But be taking no unnecessary risks and be not gone long or syne we will be charging over you in the dark."

Chakoni snaked forward into the obscurity, and for fifteen anxious minutes the Hudson's Bay men hung ready to repel attack, or, if demanded, to bolt to Chakoni's aid, but no sound came from the firing-line in front.

Then, as abruptly as he had vanished, Chakoni arose among them out of the forest growth.

"They are weak, factor," he whispered, panting with the exertion of worming his way over the rough rocks. "I was right among them unnoticed, and they lie in the little ravine ahead. They can not be many more than threescore. Spring like the wolf upon them! Spring and snap, and you have them!"

"Fair grand!" exulted Ivan. "Springing we will be. Send the word down the line. Let each be giving the command to his comrade. Now—at a run!"

CRASHING tumultuously through the undergrowth and dried brush, hurling down dead, tottering trunks in their charge, recoiling violently from the obstructing limbs of sound trees only to dash on again with increased speed, the Hudson's Bay force swept forward over the edge of the little ravine and fell upon their ambushers. And even before they were within striking distance Ivan knew that Chakoni's estimate of the enemy's weakness was right. As his men crashed on he could hear the men of the United Fur crashing away, and that meant not faint heart, but dearth of numbers.

Only a few made a stand.

Only a straggling line of fire met the charge.

Several gaps opened in the Hudson's Bay ranks, but these gaps closed up promptly, and right on top of the spitting muzzles the Chimo force overwhelmed and swallowed the valiant handful.

Ivan himself had charged in on top of the one who appeared to be the leader. The latter's rifle went off at the contact. The ball cut a surface groove in Ivan's shoulder muscle, staggering him for a second, but the next second he had gripped his opponent in his powerful arms.

"You will be ambushing me, will you?" Ivan roared as, foremost of the eight captives dragged out of the ravine, he hauled his prisoner along toward a fire his men had hastily kindled. "Come up with you to the light. I have questions to ask of you concerning Channing's strategy."

Into the full glare of the upspringing flames he thrust his captive, muffled to the chin in a long mackinaw coat which impeded his struggles, and as the firelight bathed the features above the mackinaw, Ivan gazed into the face of Landra Clavaire!

"God forgie's, girl! Are you gone clean demented? What in Heffen's name will you be meaning?"

Yet before the lips of her startled, white, yet determined face had time to move in answer, he read the strategy of her desperate essay.

For off to the east in the dry valley bed, a mile or so away, the rattle of rifle fire shattered the night.

"Preserve's!" Ivan ejaculated. "The George River men waylaid also! And outnumbered three to one, I'll warrant. You thought to hold us here with a handful while Channing annihilated Eduldund's force and swung back to your aid. Boldly planned, girl, and bravely tried! And forbye, had it not been for Chakoni, it surely would have worked. We would not have known your weakness and charged. But plainly the fortunes of war are against you, Landra.

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We will be with Eduldund in a crack. Swift, men! Forward once more!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE LEAVEN OF LOVE

SLIPPING Landra into the grasp of another warder of the prisoners by the fire, Ivan led the dash up the little ravine into the foot of the eastern valley. The whole force raised a mighty shout as they ran and fired their rifles promiscuously, partly to let the George River men know help was coming, and partly to deter Channing's force from pressing the attack.

The ominous roar of their advance filled the forest like a rushing flood, and high above the tumult of their going rang their battle-song:

Our Company is our faith and trust: Lo, we are its sons for aye!
And we reap its worth from savage earth, while we hold bitter foes at bay.
From North to South and from East to West we fare at its grim command,
And we plant its flag on clay or crag through the wilds of the vast Northland.

The clamor of their lungs and firearms had the desired double effect. The George River men pealed forth an answering verse and fell with fresh vigor against the United Fur's superior force. Channing found himself giving ground instead of winning it, and the menace of the Chimo party turned the retirement of his followers into a rout.

A surprise had been his aim and not straight fighting in the open, and now that a surprise was beyond his gaining he broke for the shelter of the near-by Post.

Ivan, rushing rapidly up the valley, struck at his flank in an effort to cut him off before he could reach the stockades, but the stroke was minutes slow. Channing had time to withdraw his men into the forest aisles, where a charge could not be undertaken to advantage, and the factor was denied an encircling movement which would have decided the fate of the United Fur upon the spot.

Even at that he attempted the impossible, striking after the retreating force through the spruce aisles, but in the intense darkness of those aisles the attempt was futile. All he got for his temerity was the loss of four more men and a blow upon his wounded shoulder from some one's rifle-butt that made the trickling gash spout blood in a stream.

Crimson staining his left side from shoulder to knee, he reluctantly desisted and swerved back across the valley bottom to Eduldund, who by the glare of torches was taking tally of his forces.

"How many will you be losing?" asked Ivan, panting from his run.

"You are hit!" exclaimed Eduldund, holding his torch close in alarm. "You are plastered and drenched with blood."

"It is nothing," belittled Ivan. "Where runs the most gore you will generally be finding the least hurt. The bullet but scragged the deltoid. It will be well in a crack. How many of your men have gone down?"

"Ten," informed the George River Post-keeper. "I can flatter myself in getting off easily. We scented trouble from the first rifle-bark on the Whale, and took to cover. It was while working down to you we ran into their ambuscade. But how did it fare with you?"

"I think I lost six at the ravine and four here. A round score gone between us, but in dead, wounded and prisoners I'll warrant the United Fur has lost double that number. Let us be going back and seeing."

BACK to the fire, which had now grown to a huge beacon upon the lip of the ravine, the merged forces of the Factor and Eduldund trooped in a throng. Many torches lighted their path, and those who had fallen were borne along by their comrades upon rude stretchers made of spruce boughs.

Ivan stalked at their head. Into the circle of illumination he strode, all bloody, and at sight of the great streak of crimson Landra gave a cry and broke suddenly from the midst of the prisoners through the ring of warders. Before the latter could stop her she clutched at Ivan in alarm, staining her garments against his red-smeared ones, and gazing wildly up into his face.

"You are hurt; you are badly hurt!" she frantically declared. "Ivan, let me see!"

"A scratch, girl! Nothing but a scratch!" he laughed. "'Twas a careless rifle-butt and not the bullet that made so much mess. A splash of cold water and a bit of spruce gum is all it needs."

"But let me see!" she insisted. "You are deceiving me, I know you are deceiving

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me. Take off your mackinaw coat. Slip your sound arm out—so! Now carefully with the other. Ah! Thank Heaven my bullet went no truer!"

She wiped away the gore with her handkerchief, revealing the raw red rip in the smooth white swell of Ivan's shoulder muscle.

"Cold water and spruce gum!" chuckled Ivan, elated at her intense solicitude.

"Yes, and the wounding hand to apply them!" she returned. Wheeling to some of the Hudson's Bay men at hand she bade them fetch the required articles. "Quick!" she commanded. "Water from the Whale and gum from a handy tree!"

They were fetched on the instant.

Landra made Ivan sit down by the fire, and contritely and deftly she stanched the flow of blood, applied the spruce gum, and bound the whole with a bandage made of handkerchiefs.

"Expiation, I am thinking, eh?" he asked, looking whimsically into her eyes as she finished.

But to his astonishment there were tears in her eyes.

He stared at her by the light of the fire, at the end of which they had been practically left alone, the warders herding the prisoners at the other end, and the rest of the Hudson's Bay force searching by torchlight for the dead and wounded of the skirmish, and as he stared he realized that she was mightily shaken.

"Girl, what is it?" he ventured softly. "There is something fey working in you, and you are all a-tremble."

Abruptly her hysterical tears fell, and abruptly she hid her face upon Ivan's knees.

"Forgive me, Ivan, forgive me!" she implored. "I did it without malice and for the cause. But I did not think of harming you. I was fighting you in the abstract, in the spirit, and the fact never came home to me before that you might suffer bodily injury through my antagonism until I saw my ragged bullet-hole in your flesh."

"And then, Landra—" he whispered, passing a caressing hand over her hair.

"I felt just like I did that night by the tomb on Nachikopi. You remember that night?"

"Aye, that I do."

"Well, I felt as I did then when you smothered the fire and let the night drop again on the forest. I felt the touch of cold and darkness and loneliness, and I thought of what I might have felt had you not been near!"

"'Fore God, girl," exclaimed Ivan, "those are sweet words to be hearing!" He raised her face between his hands and gazed tenderly into the wet gray eyes. "I was saying but a short night ago in my council-room that the strength of true love was not in you, but I was wrong. Losh! I was shamelessly wrong. And you were speaking harsh words also in that same council-room, but I am thinking it was in the heat of the moment and that you did not mean them in their essence. Is it not, Landra, that your love is mightier than you thought?"

"I don't know, Ivan," she wavered. "I half believe—but it would be disloyal to hint what I believe. Hush! Don't urge me! And let me go! Yonder is your Post-keeper coming from the search."

SHE disengaged herself as Eduldund came stalking forward from the ravine to the fire, but before the latter approached very closely the factor stopped him with a gesture.

"How many have you been finding?" he demanded.

"Thirty-three of their dead and disabled, all told," answered Eduldund.

He seemed concerned only with the delivery of his report and not at all with the attitude of the two by the fire, and having delivered the report he turned away to direct his men in the care of the wounded.

"Thirty-three and seven prisoners," totaled Ivan, "make the twoscore I was estimating, that is, without counting yourself, Landra!"

"Forty!" shivered Landra. "What a piteous waste of men, Ivan!"

"Aye, and in a lost cause! For it is a lost cause you are cleaving to, girl. You hesitate to desert, but syne there will be nothing left to desert. There will be no United Fur Company in the Labrador. The end is certain. Why resist? Why lose more men in a piteous waste, as you say? Your word carries weight with your uncle. Be going to him and advise him to surrender while there is time. It is the best solution of the matter for him. Aye, and for the both of us also!"

The factor leaned toward her eagerly, and his eagerness struck response in her eyes.

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In them Ivan saw unmistakably the love-light glow to blazing splendor.

"Ivan, Ivan," she faltered, "almost you persuade me!"

"Be persuaded, girl!" he urged tremulously, putting out his hands upon hers. "Be persuaded fully!"

"No, no," she cried, snatching away her hands as if recoiling from the very brink of assent. "No, no, Ivan! At least—not yet! I will go back to the Post, but I can not pledge myself to advise my uncle to surrender!"

"Then be going unpledged, Landra," breathed Ivan, gently directing her off along the bank of the Whale. "The best way is up the shore. It is only a step to the Post, and you will be safer alone than with a Hudson's Bay guard. Be calling your name as you go, and they will hear.

"And remember, though I am binding you to nothing, I am looking for some reward for my generosity. I am seeing, girl, that the leaven of love is working in you, and I am knowing that your heart will triumph in the end. But remember also, though I am letting you go foot-loose, free and unpledged, that I am not weakening from the vow I swore yon night in the council-room.

"It is not according to my code that I should be keeping you here now because you blundered across my path. I am still minded to come over the Whale Post palisades in the morn and take you, and in the morn you will surrender with the rest. So good-by—till dawn!"

From the fire Landra walked slowly up the larch-fringed shore of the Whale, and as she went, tardily, hesitatingly, she realized that Ivan had spoken the secret truth. The leaven of love was indeed working in her, insidiously fermenting a change.

Her mind was in a chaos and her soul in a tumult. Bewildered by conflicting impulses, she knew not whether to go on or to go back. Her heart leaped out to Ivan, but the ties of allegiance drew her forward.

Once Ivan saw her pause, just on the rim of the firelight, and look mutely back, and so near she seemed to yielding that she retraced her path a step or two. With a low, exultant exclamation Ivan took a stride to meet her, but his exclamation subsided into a sigh, for, catching herself up short, she was gone in the next instant behind the screen of the larches.

CHAPTER XVII

THE STORMING

THE night of the ambuscade, August the eighth, had been cool throughout its waning hours with a tang in the air that foretold the early advent of Autumn. Dawn of the ninth was heralded by a dense white-frost fog that cloaked the Valley of the Whale, and out of this fog, as an osprey swoops through a river mist upon its prey beneath, so the factor swooped upon Channing's stronghold.

Despite his casualties of the previous night he still had a striking force of practically four hundred men. This force he had divided into four sections, riflemen, axmen, ladder-men, and fagot-men, one hundred of each, and from four different quarters of the forest that crowded on the Post they broke forth simultaneously and hurled themselves against the palisades. Instantly the strategy of the stroke in the fog became apparent. The defenders of the Post knew by the impact that the attack had come, but in the thick mist-veil they could not discern the attackers.

They could only fire blindly outward and downward over the palisades at formless, fighting demons, whose ferocity shook their timber walls. The forest was filled with a pandemonium of sound, the confused shouting of the defenders on top of the walls, the booming of guns, the thud of the axes, the crackle of the lighted fagots, and over all the thunderous war-cry of the Hudson's Bay men.

Channing's force was numerically superior to that of the Factor. Recognizing a crisis, he had drawn on the Barren Grounds tribe to strengthen the garrison of the Post. Their tepees lay deserted, except for the women and children, upon the edge of the fringe of spruce.

Deserted, too, the United Fur ship, *Fortune*, lay in the offing with her crew to a man in the battle. But though inferior in numbers Ivan's force was not inferior in strength. It had greater shocking power. Every man in it was a true Northman, versed in the ruses and trained in the maneuvers of Northland warfare, whereas Channing's defending body was a conglomeration of many types, whose varied methods prevented them working efficiently together.

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The hearts of the Nascaupees were not in the conflict. They fought as mercenaries who had sold themselves and had no other alternative, while the *Fortune's* crew found themselves at a disadvantage in warfare upon the land and unacquainted with the ways and wiles of their Northern foemen.

Furthermore, Ivan outgeneraled Channing from the start. The factor's organization was complete and his instructions explicit. His chief trader, Sachelle, had command of the ax-men, Chakoni of the riflemen, Eduldund, the George River Post-keeper, of the fagot-men, and Ivan himself of the ladder-men.

Each party had a single thing to do. They did it and it alone. The ax-wielders darted in and crouched low against the stockade, hewing viciously to tear a breach in the timbers. The fagot-bearers likewise darted in and set fire to pitch-soaked bundles of boughs under the palisades.

The ladder-carriers threw great ladders, made of single tree-trunks, with the branches lopped off a foot from the crotches, against the palisades, and, their guns slung on their shoulders, their pistols in their hands, and their knives in their teeth, swarmed up to scale the wall.

And on top of this violent assault, covering the various charges and making them possible, the picked riflemen poured a storm of bullets into the Post.

Thus Seton Channing found himself resisting not one attack, but in reality four attacks, which divided the attention of his men and disorganized their resistance. They could not throw water on burning palisades, smite down ax-men who splintered the wall, thrust ladders to the ground, and at the same time meet the rifle volleys which hailed them like Winter hail. And from that moment of uncertainty they were beaten men. For this was not a siege, but a storming, and when it was not stemmed in the initial moment of the onslaught, the Post was lost.

Already many breaches had been made in the wall, and breachers and defenders were locked in a death struggle in the narrow gaps. Above them the fired palings blazed twenty feet in air, and between the tongues of flame upreared the ladders, held to the crumbling palisades in spite of repulse by the sheer weight of men's bodies covering the trunks like ants. The riflemen were backing the ladder-men, and the fagot-men, their incendiary mission accomplished, were backing them both.

About them the fire roared and spread. It flared over the top of the palisade to the corner watch-towers and enveloped the Post buildings themselves. Hurling down those who opposed him, Ivan Trevor came up on the crest of the assaulting wave, and as he reached the top of the wall he saw the whole place wrapped in fire.

The heat of the fire was driving the fog skyward and clearing the air, and the dawn wind, blowing up from Ungava Bay, split the pall that hung over the water and let in the light of the rising sun upon river, ship, forest and Post.

A WILD scene, it burst upon the factor's vision for the first time: the blood-red water, the ink-black vessel, the Autumn-crimsoned forest, and the primitive horde struggling amid the smoke and the gutting blaze.

In the forefront he could see Seton Channing, unflinching in the hour of defeat, his eyes gleaming wide and fierce, a stern, strong foeman, fighting to the last, even such a man as Ivan had read him in his own bed in Chimo Post, a man grim and tenacious in endeavor, relentless in conflict, forceful in his own ends and purposes to the verge of madness.

A moment the factor glimpsed him thus, and then behind he saw Landra in the thick of the battle, reloading extra rifles with swift hands, and passing them to the defenders.

"'Fore Heffen, she will be killed!" roared Ivan. "I thought her under cover. Cease firing, men. Cease——"

His command was drowned in the crash of the fire-eaten, ax-bitten palisade. It went down suddenly beneath him and his men, and he landed thirty feet inside the stockade, among the burning debris and right under Channing's uplifted gun-butt.

The fall dazed him. In a detached manner he saw the gun-butt start for his head, and wondered why it did not land. Then he heard a rifle roar over him and saw Chakoni's dark eyes, sighting along the barrel, light fiercely as Channing went down.

Ivan struggled up with a grateful word to the Nascaupee, but Chakoni did not hear. His rifle still outflung in the death-shot, he gloated, fierce-eyed, over the motionless leader of the United Fur, and the factor

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remembered the matter of Ayume and plunged on through the smoke and the rabble to find Landra Clavaire.

Back of the Barren Grounds tribe who were fighting in a body, he caught sight of her again, and with a shout to her he dashed straight through their ranks. He had lost his weapon in his fall. He launched upon them empty-handed, and yet so great had been his authority, so strong his influence over them prior to the coming of Seton Channing, that they fell under the spell of his wrath and threw down their arms and cringed before him.

"Notawenan, our father," they supplicated in Cree, "be not enraged with us. We were tempted with bribes, and we forgot thy house. Take us back and be not heavy in chastisement!"

"Then get to your tepees on the instant out of the fight!" roared Ivan as he ran. "To your tepees, and I will be judging you at the time appointed!"

Scattering them right and left, trampling upon their prostrate forms, he broke through and grasped the girl, who tried to get away in the rear.

"Have I kept my oath?" he exulted, encircling her with his giant arms and swinging her clear of her feet. "I was swearing I would sweep the United Fur men into Ungava Bay and raze their Post to the rocks. Aye, and I was swearing that over the crumbling palisades I would come and take you. Have I kept my oath?"

Before the panting Landra could answer, a figure flying through the smoke blundered blindly into them. Ivan recoiled, grasped another soft, girlish arm, and looked into the straight-mouthed, flat-nosed, wooden face of Ayume. Upon the arm he gripped she hugged a blanketed bundle from which arose thin childish wails, the cry of the newborn, pitifully weak, amid the unholy din on the Whale River's shore.

"'Fore God, Ayume! Whose child is yon?"

But Ayume spat malignantly into his face as she twisted her arm from his grip and rushed away toward the Nascaupee tepees in the spruce.

"The tefflish ronion!" exploded Ivan. "Landra, whose infant is yon?"

"Aunt Undine Channing's!" moaned Landra. "In the name of Heaven, Ivan, set me down and come. She is there in the burning Post. They would not let me risk staying. I tried, but Ruthven put me out bodily. He was there, Surgeon Ruthven of the ship *Fortune*, and Ayume, too."

"Good God forgie's!" the Factor groaned. "But I did not know, Landra. I swear to high Heffen and the Almighty that I did not know."

"I understand, Ivan, I understand that," sobbed Landra, catching his hand to steady herself as they raced toward the burning Post. "And pray God we are not too late!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NATAL HOUR

THEY had crossed the stockade yard, but they had not reached the outer fire ring when they beheld a man stagger through the red heart of the flame.

"Ruthven!" screamed Landra.

And Ivan saw that his charred clothes were those of a ship's surgeon.

Ruthven's face was scorched to a cinder. He had his head bent low over the blanket-wrapped burden he bore, and his feet blundered uncertainly.

Ivan leaped through the fire to him, and none too soon, for Ruthven flung up his arms and fell at Ivan's feet. The burden he carried sagged across Ivan's shoulder. The surgeon himself lay face down in the ashes, but Ivan, the burden on his shoulder and one hand fastened in Ruthven's clothes, scuffled backward out of the flame-ring and dragged the fallen man clear.

"A man, Landra!" he breathed thickly, pausing beyond the sear of the heat to feel the surgeon's breast. "A man-size man! Yet his great heart's still, with the flame in his lungs and all. But she—" slipping back the blanket from the pale face—"she has neffer a singe, and forby she breathes. Quick, girl, to yon tepee yonder! You and Ayume and the women of the tribe must do what you can. Ayume will know what is best, with her black witch-magic."

From the tepee where he eased down Channing's wife to the care of the women, Ivan sped along the shore toward his retainers. The fall of Seton Channing and the desertion of the Nascaupees had completed what the fire and the breaching of the palisades had begun. What remained of the forces of the United Fur Company were flinging riverward in utter rout, running waist-deep in the Whale and launching

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the ship's boats drawn up under the water-gate of the fort, their only thought to board the *Fortune* before it should catch fire from the showering sparks of the Post.

Boatload after boatload of panic-stricken Monroe hirelings Ivan saw dash out into the offing, and after them, bent on completing the debacle, swept the Hudson's Bay force. But the latter were not quick enough in their dash to prevent the launch-of the crafts. Getting out of the mêlée within the palisade yard and through the burning palisades themselves had handicapped them somewhat.

One boat only they seized, rushing neck-deep in the water to do it, but even as they grasped the stern, its occupants threw themselves out of the bow and swam for it till hauled aboard the other boats. They had taken with them the oars of the boat the Hudson's Bay men had seized, and chagrined at not being able to follow, these dragged out their prize with the evident intention of breaking it up on the rocks.

But the factor stopped them in the act.

"Wait," he commanded, "it may be there is still a passenger for it—I am not knowing. If not—then I will be letting you smash to your soul's content!"

For he marked Landra coming over the rocks from the tepees and down the shore, and eagerly he turned to her.

"Girl, is it life or—death?" he asked.

"Life with the boy," she answered, "and with Undine——"

Landra paused, looked into his face and burst into weeping.

Ivan put out compassionate hands upon hers.

"God forgie's again!" he faltered. "I will be carrying the remorse of it all my years. But they will be buried here with the honors of war, Landra; they both will be buried here; aye, and brave Ruthven, too. And you, will you be staying to see them at the last or will you be going on the fugitive *Fortune?*

"It is as you will. For I could not be keeping you now against your will. If it is that you must go, say the word, and my men will be chopping out a pair of sweeps in a crack and rowing you after the United Fur ship before she clears the estuary."

"No, no, Ivan, let it go," Landra cried impetuously, gazing at the departing vessel. "I am staying here."

"With the dead?" he asked significantly.

She turned her wet, earnest face fairly to his anxious one, and a gleam flashed up through her misty eyes like the sun-glint in the Labrador *dwis*. For it was as Ivan had foretold. Ties of kinship were gone. Ties of Company were gone. She had upheld her cause to the ultimate end, and with a clear conscience could turn to her desire.

"Yes, Ivan," she whispered, "and with the living!"

"'Fore Heffen, Landra!" he exclaimed. "You say so? Your words are the words I have been hoping for. Aye, and praying for, and in them burns the splendor and the vision of life."

His hands went up. He drew her closer by the shoulders, and while he searched her eyes he knew that as in the Whale River Post it was the natal hour in her being; that the love which had struggled so long against the confining bonds of tradition and kinship and allegiance had at last leaped live-born from her heart.

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THE STOLEN WOMAN

By Arthur D. Howden Smith

Author of "The Sinews of War," "The Man Who Could Not Die," etc.

THIS is the story of how Spiro, son of Vlacho the Shepherd, won Helya, daughter of Ilia Staradoff, the headman of Garovna, and of what followed afterward. It is a story of Greek and Bulgar. Also, it is not a pretty story. But surely, if the tale reeks of horror and grim tragedy, if the curtain of impending doom hangs low over every phase, like the rustling forests of pine-trees that clothe the Balkan hills—surely, notwithstanding all this, it is a tale of men; of men red-blooded, stark and virile, and of a woman who dared.

So far as I know, this tale has never been told before in print. I had it from a wandering minstrel who happened upon our camp-fire in a sullen pass of the Bulgarian Rhodopes, and in exchange for a plate of *pilaf* and a bed near the coals gave us the gossip of a whole vilayet and a concert on his *balalaika*. It was then fully a year old, and on its way to be forgotten, so perhaps I may claim credit for rescuing it from oblivion. Of its verity I do not doubt; for Nicolo, my guide, who was of Seres stock himself, had heard some rumors of the last fight in the khans of Sofia. In fact, the raid on the great monastery of St. Chrysostom had been the subject of several exchanges of notes between the Greek government and the Principality, and a cause of heated discussion between the clergy of the two state churches.

But all this is beside the mark. Here is the story, told pretty much as the minstrel—his name was Stephanoff—told it to us, by the flaring light of the camp-fire, with the tossing branches of the giant balsam pines playing a constant accompaniment to his words, while at intervals he himself would take his instrument and chant the passages. It was so, I remember, that he rendered the song of the Abbot John, who held the breach against the Gritcheff *cheta*, after they had blown down the monastery walls with dynamite. It was a great song, a song to set the blood pumping through your veins and to start the sword-itch in your hand—ay, just as the whole story was calculated to fill a man's mind with sinful thoughts of doing harm to his fellow creatures.

Now this is the tale.

OVER beyond the Seres hills there is a vale called the Vale of Kreska, which is very fair and beautiful to look upon. Once the hillsides were covered with fields of tobacco, rice and barley; but now they are desolate and barren, and the wolves slink through the charred ruins of the two villages that sit at opposite ends of the vale—the villages of Garovna and Sete-Mali. Like everything else in Macedonia, these villages were older than the memory of man could tell; but they had never been friendly. For since local traditions began, Garovna had been Bulgarian and Sete-Mali had been Greek. And there is a saying in Bulgaria that a Greek hates the Turk most, but he hates the Bulgars more. The Greeks also have a more or less similar saying, cut to fit their own feelings in the matter.

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The headman of Garovna was Ilia Staradoff, who was the wealthiest landholder in the *rayon*. He had a daughter Helya who was accounted fairest of all the girls of the village—yes, or of the whole district, for that matter. She was tall and fair and flaxen, possessed of a blonde beauty in striking contrast to the dark features of most Macedonians of every race. Garovna was an out-of-the-way place, many miles distant from the nearest Turkish garrison town, or otherwise old Ilia would have had his troubles protecting his daughter from the hungry young officers and officials who scour their districts for fresh prey.

But as it was the girl grew up wholesome and innocent—or so it seemed; and on the day that she was eighteen years old her father gave a great feast to all his kindred and friends for many miles around, and told her and told them that she was to marry her cousin, Boris Gritcheff, who had already made himself famous as the *voivode* of the dreaded Gritcheff *cheta*, the most successful of the bands that fought the Turks under the banner of the Committee of Three. So she had to stand out there before them all and give her hand into the hand of young Boris, while he plighted his troth to her.

But it was noted by all that when her turn came to speak the words that amount to all but marriage among the Bulgars there was no cordiality in her voice, and a look of aversion was all that she accorded in response to the frank admiration that shone in her lover's face.

"What, daughter, can you not smile upon your betrothed husband?" asked her father in displeasure.

"Nay, father," she answered, "the smile goes only where the heart goes."

Whereat all the young girls of the village, to whom Boris Gritcheff was the handsomest youth in the world, marveled greatly and murmured among themselves. But Boris took the words with a brave smile, and turned them so as to shield her from her father's wrath.

"Nay, uncle," he said. "Hath a maiden no cause to be startled when she gains a husband without a wooing?"

Old Ilia Staradoff, who was a man of exceeding obstinacy and used to override all who objected to his will, merely muttered in his beard at this. But she showed no gratitude to Boris, nor would she even give him a civil word, and the long and the short of it was that she left him as soon as opportunity offered.

That afternoon the merrymaking went on unabated, with young men and maidens dancing in the meadow behind the church, and the old folk clustered about the porch of the priest's house, listening to a discourse that was led by Papa Ivan and old Ilia. Boris made some futile effort to find Helya, but when one of her friends told him that she had gone off by herself to pray and arrange her hair he desisted, and went and joined the older men and talked politics and war with them until after evening fell.

Then, while the old women prepared the evening supper for them, the young people who had been playing in the meadows made a plan to dance a bridal *horo*, and some of the girls and youths went in hunt of the newly betrothed couple. Boris the youths found with little difficulty, and him they dragged with joyous cries from the company of his elders. But the girls hunted high and low for Helya and found no sign of her, so that presently others heard of her absence and joined in the search. And finally some one told her father and Boris Gritcheff that she could not be found; and a hue and cry was raised; and the people poured through the village, ransacking every house and even the church. But she was not found.

Young Boris, with a tense look on his face, called upon the youths of his *cheta*, and they beat the hillsides all around the valley; but not a trace of her did they find until after the moon was full, when they came upon a half-witted boy, one Yanni, who tended the flocks of Ilia Staradoff on the tablelands above the village.

He told them a tale which nobody believed at first, of how he had seen Helya climbing the hillside in great misery, stopping every now and then to wring her hands and weep; of how she had walked past him without seeing him or his sheep, so great was her grief; and of how, as she had walked on across the moors in the twilight, he had seen a man rise up from the shadows at her side and take her in his arms. After that, said Yanni the half-witted, she and the man had walked away together into the shadows.

Vast was the amazement of all those who had been making merry at the betrothal feast. Not a man of the village was absent. So who could the stranger be? Young Boris

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Gritcheff did not waste time in discussion, however. He went straight to his uncle's house, took down his Mannlicher from the wall, strapped on his bandoliers of cartridges, and gathered around him the men of his *cheta* who had come with him to the feast. For the Turks had set a price on Boris's head, and he never traveled alone. All curs dread the wolf pack, as the saying is.

At any rate, having assembled his men at his back, Boris marched up to where the headman sat beside the priest, biting his lips and twisting his fingers in impotent effort to unravel the mystery.

"I say no word of blame for what has happened, uncle," said Boris, "knowing that no blame can attach to you, who have been deceived even as I have been. But I shall find out who has wronged me and secure vengeance."

The thunder cloud lifted somewhat from Ilia's brows.

"Those are good words, nephew," he replied. "But my counsel is that you wait your vengeance."

And even as he spoke, a man who panted from much running staggered into the little square. In the starlight some recognized him for the teller of this tale, Stephanoff the minstrel, a man of no village, who roamed the hills from house to house, earning his bread by his strange tales and his songs of war and love.

"Ilia Staradoff," he panted, "I have a message for you. Three hours agone, as I lay on the hillside over toward Sete-Mali, a man and a woman passed me. The woman was your daughter Helya, and the man was Spiro, son of Vlacho the Shepherd of Sete-Mali and the Captain of the *andari* of St. Chrysostom."

Old Staradoff was too much taken aback to say anything for a time. He sat and looked at the man who was Stephanoff the minstrel, and the hatred in his face was so bitter that the minstrel was frightened.

"So," he said presently, "I have reared a viper in my bosom, a wanton in my home, a nameless thing who mates with Greeks!"

There was a clang of steel, as young Boris drew his sharp knife-bayonet from its sheath, and held its cross-hilt before him.

"Uncle!" he cried. "Uncle, here is the answer. Give me my right to vengeance!"

"Nay, boy," said old Staradoff kindly, "your vengeance is my vengeance, too. We will seek it together."

And he got up and turned to go into his house to get his arms. But the priest, Papa Ivan, stayed him.

"I counsel that you wait," said Papa Ivan. "What good will it do you to gather your young men, and rush off at once into what may well be a trap? Be assured that this accursed Greek dog has his *andari* at his back, and waits in ambush at Sete-Mali. Even if you should gain victory in such a combat, it would be at too great a cost. My counsel is that you wait a week or more until their vigilance is relaxed, and then you can sweep down upon Sete-Mali like the whirlwind of the Most High and blast the schismatic dogs in their beds. Yes, and I, Papa Ivan, I will bless your arms and help you in your just fight."

He was a very wise man, this Papa Ivan, and cunning, and even young Boris Gritcheff saw the wisdom of his words; so that the arms were put away, and all save a few young men who were thrown out into the hills to serve as sentries—as was the regular custom—sought their beds. And far over the hills Spiro and Helya, the Greek and the Bulgar, who had defied the creeds of their races, lay in the purple heather in each other's arms and forgot the world.

II

SO FOR a week longer there was peace in the Vale of Kreska; Boris Gritcheff and his men marched away to a certain hiding-place they had in the mountains, in order further to allay the suspicious at Sete-Mali, and to all outward seeming Ilia Staradoff was ignorant that his daughter had fled with Spiro, son of Vlacho the Shepherd of Sete-Mali. Indeed, Ilia pretended to suspect Turkish raiders, and sent men to lay complaints before the Vali.

Thus were the Greeks of Sete-Mali befooled. They sent spies to lie in the hills round about Garovna, but the teller of this tale, Stephanoff the Minstrel, also spied upon these spies, and not a step did they take without his being close to their trails. Moreover, Stephanoff the Minstrel went often by Sete-Mali during the week, for his presence aroused no fears. Wherefore, Ilia Staradoff, as he sat grinding his teeth in his own house, knew everything that passed in Sete-Mali, and comforted himself with the knowledge that the time to strike drew near.

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Among other things, Stephanoff the Minstrel brought word of the marriage of Helya, and of the great joy her conversion had made in the heart of all the Greek priests. For it must be known to you that Vlacho the Shepherd was a man of much worth among his countrymen, owner of many farms and flocks and blood brother to the Abbot John of the great monastery of St. Chrysostom on the shores of Lake Prespa, where Spiro was captain of the men-at-arms. And the Greeks reckoned it no mean triumph to have accomplished the conversion of the daughter of the headman of Garovna. The Abbot John himself performed the ceremony, and Helya passed from the church under the crossed rifles of Spiro's *andari*, who, as Papa Ivan had anticipated, rallied promptly to their leader's support.

But as day after day passed, and there was no uneasiness for their spies to report from Garovna, a feeling of security settled down upon Sete-Mali. Men ceased to keep their arms by their sides even while they slept, and Spiro sent half of his *andari* up into the north of the vilayet to resist the aggressions of a Servian *cheta* who were trying to denationalize certain "Greek" villages that spoke Bulgarian and prayed monthly to the Committee of Three to send help to deliver them from both their Greek and Servian Metropolitans. Those were the days when Abdul the Butcher ruled by setting the Christian churches one against another so that none might be strong enough to rebel successfully.

Now when the word came to Ilia Staradoff that half of the *andari* of St. Chrysostom had gone two days' march up the Vodensko valley, he caused a swift messenger to seek the hiding-place where rested the Gritcheff *cheta* to tell young Boris that the time for vengeance was at hand. That night Boris and his *chetniks* set out for the Vale of Kreska, and just before dawn the vanguard swung through the silent streets of the village, so many ghosts wrapped in sheepskin cloaks, and sought shelter in the church, the door of which had been left open in some mysterious fashion, as often happens when "The Men of the Night" are abroad.

They slept until well into the afternoon, when the women of the village brought in food and wine. The *chetniks* busied themselves cleaning their rifles, tightening the straps of their cowhide sandals, and filling empty bottles with petroleum. Each man had to be equipped with a bottle and there were seventy-five men in the Gritcheff *cheta*.

In the meantime Boris held council in the porch with Ilia Staradoff, Papa Ivan and Stephanoff the Minstrel, who tells this tale; and between them all they settled the plans for the raid.

Two hours before midnight the Gritcheff *cheta* and more than thirty of the men of Garovna filed out of the village along the path through the vineyards which is overshadowed by the tall vines. They pushed fast across the hills, guided by Stephanoff, who knew every goat track by reason of his wanderings; and in five hours they came out upon the hillside over Sete-Mali. There was no moon that night, and in the darkness the houses of the village showed only as splotches of white, some large and some small.

The men of Garovna stood in little groups and whispered together while Boris and Ilia Staradoff held a final conference and arranged their signals. It was agreed that Staradoff should stay where he was with the villagers under him and Papa Ivan, while young Boris and the men of his *cheta*, guided by Stephanoff the Minstrel, should fetch a circle around Sete-Mali and come down upon the other side. The signal that they had gained their position was to be the cawing of a crow thrice repeated, for the teller of this tale could mimic any bird or beast that ever was.

It was not yet dawn when the crow cawed, and the circle of Mannlichers closed in on Sete-Mali. Five minutes later young Boris and his men were padding through the streets aiming for the house of Vlacho, which was set on a small hillock apart from the others, with sheepfolds and yards behind it.

The *chetniks* split up into detachments as they ran after their chief, covering the village with a network of rifles and bottles of petroleum, ready to light the thatch of twoscore houses at once. The detonation of a dynamite bomb at Vlacho's door was to be the signal for the burning. But as it chanced, some of Spiro's *andari* were lying in the courtyard of his father's house. They heard the feet of the *chetniks* and gave the alarm.

In an instant the house of Vlacho was a

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fortalice, spitting fire, and the *dur-r-rr-rr*, *durr-rr-rrr*, *durr-urr-rr* of the Greeks' Gras rifles shattered the quietness of the night, arousing every soul in the village and warning all of Gritcheff's *chetniks*, as well as Staradoff's men coming in from the other side.

Instead of simply kidnapping Vlacho and Spiro and burning the village, as he had intended, Boris found that he must make a fight to gain his object. But he lost no time in doing that which lay before him. Instead of one, half a dozen dynamite bombs rained upon Vlacho's house, and so terrific was the explosion that the entire front wall was blown down and the inside rent apart.

Many of the *andari* were killed by the explosion, and in the first wild rush the *chetniks* succeeded in catching Vlacho himself as he was about to make his retreat through the sheepfold in the rear. Him they bound and placed under secure guard, while Boris and the rest ran in search of Spiro and Helya. From frightened villagers they learned that these two had slept in Vlacho's house, and back to it they ran again, searching in the ruins, but finding never a trace of either of them.

Then another burst of firing sounded from the part of town where Staradoff was stationed, and a man came running to say that Spiro and the remnants of his *andari* were trying to force a way through. So Boris led his men toward the firing as fast as he could. But even as he came within range he saw that Spiro had gained his object. By a clever feint, the Greek drew Staradoff's fire upon one house, and then, bunching his few men behind another, he threw a bomb at the thinnest section of Staradoff's line and charged with the bayonet.

He was through before Boris came up, and the men his charge had brushed aside swore that in the forefront of the rush was a woman, flaxen-haired and terrible, with blue eyes that flamed and distended nostrils, who wielded a Gras rifle like a man. Young Boris ground his teeth and cursed with rage, for he had accomplished only half his object. But he realized he must make the best of it. It was near dawn, *askares* might appear at almost any moment now, and he had work still to be done.

By this time, the village was afire in fifty places, and the Bulgars, in obedience to orders to leave unharmed all who did not offer resistance, were occupied with saving as much of the villagers' belongings as they could. Young Boris, with Ilia Staradoff and Papa Ivan, made a rapid tour of investigation to make sure that no unnecessary damage was being done. Then they returned to Vlacho's house—or its ruins—where they had left their prisoner.

This Vlacho was a large man, black-browed and domineering, very proud and haughty. He affected not to notice the chief men of the Bulgars when they came up to him. But he flinched somewhat when Ilia Staradoff strode up in front of him, staring into his face.

"So you are Vlacho the Shepherd, of Sete-Mali?" said Ilia.

"I am Vlacho the Shepherd," answered the Greek, and he flung back his head.

"The woman-stealer?" continued Ilia.

Vlacho the Shepherd bared his teeth in an ugly grin.

"You do not deny it?" Ilia went on. "It would be useless, anyway. We have the proof; we know what became of my daughter. For this we are going to kill you."

"And if you do I still have a son who will avenge me," returned Vlacho indifferently.

He was a brave man, this Vlacho, as the Bulgars agreed.

"Your son will not have the power to avenge you," said Ilia Staradoff. "There will not be a whole house standing in the village by noon nor a head of your flocks left in the fold."

"And I say to you," answered Vlacho, "that this is a bad beginning you have made, Ilia Staradoff. There is much yet to come. Also, it was you who permitted my son to escape, and it will be you who will suffer for it before much time has passed."

Here Boris Gritcheff intervened.

"Come," he said impatiently. "This man is to die. There is no reason for delay."

"None at all," agreed Vlacho the Shepherd with a grim smile.

It is to be told that he died like a man, mocking the aim of the men who shot him.

III

IF A man harm you, you shall take revenge, says the old proverb. So our fathers did, and so must we do—more especially in dealing with the Greeks, who are pestilent dogs, always ready

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to bark among their betters. This is known as the law of *outmashtanyea* among the Bulgars, and a man who did not live up to it would not be a man. Therefore there was no surprise when the word went forth that Ilia Staradoff and his nephew Boris Gritcheff, *voivode* of the Gritcheff *cheta* and bravest of all the chieftains of the Secret Organization, had taken vengeance upon the family that had dishonored them, slain Vlacho the Shepherd, burned Sete-Mali, and driven Spiro and his Bulgar bride homeless into the hills.

"What else could they have done?" men said.

There was nothing left of Sete-Mali but the blackened ruins; there was nothing left at all of the flocks and herds of Vlacho the Shepherd. The Greek villagers, when they came to rebuild their homes, moved over the hills into the next valley. To men who could see no farther than the present, it was as if Sete-Mali and the family of Vlacho had been blotted out together and forever. But Sete-Mali was rebuilt; and Spiro, Vlacho's son, found shelter with his uncle at St. Chrysostom, and still lived to plot vengeance. Also Helya his wife was with him, and when he lagged in determination she goaded him on.

The days grew into weeks, and the weeks lengthened into months, and month followed month, while they groped for means of wholesale vengeance. Spiro had his agents in Garovna itself, but the Bulgars were watchful and Boris Gritcheff and his *komitajis* hung near all Winter to guard against a possible surprise. For both Boris and his uncle knew that the Greek bishops would not hesitate to fling their *andari* on the village if once they thought they would have a fair chance of success. It was Spring before a chance came.

Through his uncle the Abbot John, Spiro arranged with the Metropolitan of a diocese far to the north to begin a series of "treatments" upon several Bulgarian villages to induce them to tell the census officials that they were Greek, knowing the inevitable effect would be a hurry call for the aid of the Gritcheff *cheta* against repressive measures by the *andari*.

The plot worked. Young Boris was sitting with Ilia Staradoff when the messenger from the northern villages reached him.

"These people are not in my *rayon*," he said after he had read the message, "but my men seem to be nearest to them. I must leave you, uncle."

"God go with you, nephew," answered Ilia. And he kissed him, for he loved Boris like a son.

They grieved at parting, but neither knew it was the last time he would see the other.

Before sundown that day Boris with fifty of his men—all he could collect at a moment's notice—was hurrying over the trails to the north, and within the heavy stone walls of St. Chrysostom Spiro was making ready for his revenge. He had been recruiting his *andari* all Winter, and in addition to his own band he had the assistance of a squad of terrorists who had been sent up to him by the Greek propagandists in Salonica—long-haired, flat-skulled ruffians whose trade was assassination. In all, he could reckon upon the services of upward of one hundred men, aside from the villagers of Sete-Mali, who could be relied upon to come in for whatever looting there might be.

Of what follows next the teller of this tale knows only from the stories told by other men—and they are many. But it would seem that Spiro started that evening, marching as Boris Gritcheff and the men of Garovna had marched, over the little-known goat tracks of the hills.

Helya, the Stolen Woman, for whose sake blood had been shed already—and for whom it was yet to flow like the Maritza in flood—would have marched with her husband to seek revenge on her own father; but she was in a condition which forbade exertion and Spiro forced her to remain with the Abbot John—an arrangement she did not like, for it was she who had thought out the plan, picked the spies and taught Spiro the best ways to enter Garovna.

Now all went well with the plan that Helya had laid until the advance guard of the *andari* reached the mountain-flank south of Garovna, when they came upon some shepherds tending the flocks of Ilia Staradoff. These men seized their rifles and ran toward the village, firing back as they ran, and shouting "*Askares, askares, askares!*" For they thought at first that the raiders were Turkish soldiers. It was only after the Greeks began to throw dynamite bombs that the villagers suspected who they were.

Men came stumbling out of their houses half asleep, firing their rifles at friends instead of foes; the thatch blazed up under

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the torch and the petroleum bombs that accompanied the dynamite; women and children ran here and there, shouting and screaming at the top of their voices. To make matters worse, the resistance developed strong enough to anger the *andari*, and before very long the Greeks were out of hand and seeking red-eyed for slaughter. Never did village suffer more from the hands of *bashibazouks* than did Garovna from the *andari* of St. Chrysostom.

Hell was let loose that night in Garovna. The spirit of Vlacho the Shepherd stalked gauntly over the blazing roofs and stared down with grim satisfaction at the carnage that ran riot in every house courtyard. So men say. They say, too, that Spiro made no effort to stop the slaughter. At the head of his picked men, he forced his way to the house of Ilia Staradoff, where Papa Ivan and certain others had sought refuge.

All of these men were good fighters, and they slew several of the Greeks as they ran up the street under their rifles. But Spiro was an old hand at this work, and he lost no time in gaining control of the firing. Placing his men in the houses all around, he quickly directed such a fire at the windows that it was impossible for Ilia or any of his friends to reply. And then he sent forward men with axes and fagots who broke in the door and started a fire. They threw water and petroleum upon the flames, which made a thick black smoke, and before long Staradoff, Papa Ivan and the others fled from the house to escape being strangled.

But again Spiro was ready for them. This time he had many men in the shadows and doorways all about the burning house, so that as the Bulgars ran out his men jumped on them, many men on each of those who ran, and subdued them by sheer force of numbers, without killing any. This was so that they might not run the risk of killing Ilia Staradoff or Papa Ivan—both of whom Spiro had sworn should die in ways peculiarly fitting that he would devise. But the other men—there were three of them—his *andari* slew out of hand with their bayonets.

By this time the *andari* had completed their work in the village. The villagers who were not dead had escaped, and the fires were sweeping rapidly from house to house. Although it was a moonless night, the hillsides were light as day from the roaring pillars of flame that shot up from burning thatch and barns filled with produce.

All about lay the bodies of those who had fallen, men and women and little children—very little children, for these *andari* were not human. The Swedish gendarmerie officer who came two days afterward to look at the village said Greeks could not have done the work; only *bashibazouks* could be such fiends. But he had been in Macedonia only six months.

In the open space before the church there were two stakes driven into the ground, and to these Spiro bade his men bind Staradoff and Papa Ivan so that they could not move. Neither said anything, for they knew that there was no use; and this did not please Spiro. Like all Greeks, he demanded applause.

"I have made a nice little plan for you, murderer of my father," he said to Ilia. "And for you, too, Blackbird," he added to Papa Ivan.

They smiled at him.

"We are men," answered Staradoff. "Try again, boy. We do not frighten easily."

But Spiro pretended not to have heard him.

"And moreover," he said, "it will be not only you two that I shall frighten, but all your accursed race, every pig of a Bulgar, outside of the pale of Holy Orthodox Church."

"I will let you talk that out with the priest," said Staradoff. "For myself, these religious disputes make my head ache."

"What do I care for the religion of it?" retorted Spiro. "Though I would kill you all gladly for the heretic dogs you are, do you think I would go to this amount of trouble except to avenge the father you murdered?"

"Your father? Faugh! A woman-stealer, like yourself," answered Staradoff. And he spat squarely in the Greek's face.

With a curse, Spiro ran up close to him and battered his helpless mouth with both fists.

"Now I will make you beg for mercy," he cried.

He took a dynamite bomb from one of his men and placed it on the ground between Staradoff and Papa Ivan, then cut a long fuse and inserted it in the vent.

"Not bad!" exclaimed Staradoff through his bleeding lips. "A good trick for a Greek."

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"*Os bogu, bi-Ilia,*" said Papa Ivan, when he saw the Greek's purpose. "It is time I prayed for us two. We shall not have much longer."

"That is well spoken, Papa," replied Staradoff.

But while the priest sank his head in prayer, the headman kept his smiling gaze upon the figure of the Greek stooped over the bomb that lay a scant foot away. Spiro was a long time starting the fuse, every now and then looking up at his victims to see if they had yet flinched. But when he was convinced that he could get no satisfaction that way, he lighted the fuse and leaped to cover as it began to sputter.

"Good-by, Bulgars," he cried tauntingly as he ran off.

"Good-by, Greek," answered Ilia Staradoff. "Watch out for the vengeance that is to come. Your father was right, after all. The story was not all told at Sete-Mali, but there is still another chapter. And the wrath of——"

The crash of the bomb tore the words from his lips even as it rent the souls from the bodies of Ilia Staradoff, the head man of Garovna, and Papa Ivan the priest, who was known for his cunning.

IV

BEFORE Spiro drew off his *andari* from the charred shambles that had been Garovna, he took a sheet of paper with the cross of the Monastery of St. Chrysostom at the head, and wrote on it so that any might read:

TO ALL BULGARS AND SCHISMATICS:

This is the vengeance of Spiro, captain of the *andari* of St. Chrysostom and son of Vlacho the Shepherd of Sete-Mali. Let it be a warning that you should not wander from the path of Holy Orthodox Church, and that all raiders and murderers shall be punished by our inflexible arm.

He spiked this to the door of the church with a dagger.

For months afterward men of every race in Macedonia shuddered at the mention of Garovna. None disputed that Spiro had done his work thoroughly. Every Bulgar in the land spoke his name with a curse.

Boris Gritcheff denounced him to the Three in Sofia, and pleaded for help in punishing him. But even Gritcheff realized that it was idle to speak of personal satisfaction at such a time. The Turks had seized advantage of the excuse provided by the massacre at Garovna to inaugurate a systematic campaign against all the bands in the field, Bulgarian, Greek and Servian—but especially Bulgarian, because they were the strongest and constituted the most formidable menace.

It was always the custom of the Turks to incite the different Christian races, and especially the several national churches, against each other; and then when hatred flared up, red with fresh-spilled blood and crowned with the flames of burning farmsteads, to intervene in the rôle of police-officer and carry the damage already done to a satisfactory and legitimate conclusion.

This time Halil Pasha, the Turkish governor, told the foreign consuls that the Greek raid upon Garovna, which had been prompted by the arrogance of Bulgarian bands, was expected to cause renewed Bulgarian insurgent activity. Therefore, he said, his government had decided to adopt a policy of extirpation of the Bulgarian bands, in order to check such a movement in the bud. He said nothing about punishing the Greeks, because he knew they were not strong enough to be dangerous; and he was perfectly willing to leave Spiro alone, counting upon him as a constant source of trouble in the Christian camps. Such were the policies of old Abdul the Butcher.

In such a state of affairs the hands of the Bulgarian *chetniks* were kept busied without any intermission. Many *chetas* retreated across the frontier to rest and recuperate until the activities of the Turkish troops were moderated. But a few of the more daring leaders like Boris Gritcheff insisted upon keeping the field at all risks, constantly on the move, and always on the lookout for a chance to strike a swift and sudden blow at the *askares*. The heart of Boris was almost broken by the murder of his uncle. He often said in those days that all he lived for was vengeance, the slaying of more enemies of his race.

And so in a short time he became even more of a scourge to the *askares* than he had ever been in the past. He flashed from one rayon into another seventy-five miles distant in a day and a night. There was no limit to the ground he covered.

More than once the Turkish commanders thought they had hemmed him in. But he played hob with three army corps, and

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laughed in their faces at the most subtle plots to inveigle him into inextricable situations. That is to say, he would have laughed had there been any laughter in his heart. The time had passed when a score of dead *askares* meant anything more to him than a score of dead *askares*. Besides, it began to bore him to have to kill *askares* when every nerve in him itched to get at the Greeks.

The months of relentless warfare in which the Secret Organization fought for its life against the most formidable efforts yet launched against it by the Turkish government were of great value to him, however. They served to build up and increase his prestige, as has been told, until the Three in Sofia, who sit behind closed doors and order the destinies of the thousands who obey their hidden rule, were obliged to take him into their confidence and name him special revisor with powers of life and death, peremptory taxation and levy, in all the five vilayets. Also, in the course of events, he came to hear somewhat of Spiro and Helya.

For a time these two stayed in Greece, whither they had fled after it appeared to Spiro what a storm his savagery at Garovna had raised. But when more than a year had passed and one hundred and twenty thousand *askares* had given up as hopeless the task of eradicating the Secret Organization, Spiro ventured to return.

Before this Helya's child had been born —a boy, but sickly and weak. These two were with Spiro when he came back to the monastery of St. Chrysostom, where his uncle the Abbot John welcomed him gladly. With the settling down of the country about the monastery the Abbot John saw some fine opportunities for proselyting, and he knew no more ruthless hand than Spiro's to direct the work.

Nimble feet soon brought word to Boris Gritcheff of how his enemy was back again, and the *voivode* of the Gritcheff *cheta* set out to perfect the details of the plan of final vengeance which had already begun to shape itself in his mind. At this time the teller of this tale, Stephanoff the Minstrel, marched with the Gritcheff *cheta*, sharing the blanket of the *voivode* and keeping step with him on the long night journeys over the hills.

It was many months after the return of Spiro and Helya before Boris could take his mind from the duties laid upon him by the Three. The vigor of the Turkish onslaught had served to shatter the machinery of the Organization wherever it was vulnerable, and upon the shoulders of Boris was cast the burden of rebuilding it. Another year was almost over when Boris felt that his allotted work was done. And when that time came, the Three in Sofia sent for him, telling him that they wished to confer with him and that this was the opportunity for a rest—which he had not had for two years.

But Boris answered no. He replied to the Three that he had work of his own to be done first, and he craved their support. He set forth the evil which Spiro and his father before him had wrought upon his honor, and how they had blasted Garovna, and how now they strove to denationalize every Bulgar village between the shores of Lake Prespa and the Albanian frontier.

He told also of the Abbot John, in whose hands was the Greek propaganda, administered through him direct from Athens. St. Chrysostom, his spies reported to him, was nothing more nor less than a rallying-place for Greek intrigue, a resort of missionary priests and Terrorists, a recruiting center for *andari* and a magazine for their wants. Here was a source of constant evil, he urged—a menace which should be obliterated in the interests of the Secret Organization. But he must have men, if it was to be done, and ample means to move quickly, so that none might stop him.

At that time the Arabs in the Yemen made war against the Turks, and many of the *askares* quartered in Macedonia were drafted to Asia Minor, so that there was an interval of comparative peace. In some of the rayons the *chetas* had nothing to occupy them beyond the usual administration of justice and warding off *bashibazouk* attacks.

Therefore the Three sent word to Boris that according to his authority as revisor he might draw upon the services of as many men as he thought necessary for his task, over and beyond the strength of his own *cheta*. And this was the beginning of the last act of the great tragedy that was played about Helya, whom men called the Stolen Woman.

YOU must know that the Bulgars managed this affair with great secrecy, as was necessary. When word was sent to *voivodes* all over Macedonia

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to detail twenty or thirty of their men, as the case might be, to march to a certain gathering-place in the hills above where Garovna had been, none knew the object of the expedition. Boris managed his plan so cleverly that less than half a dozen men in all Macedonia knew of it a week in advance.

And even after his *chetniks* began to gather in the hiding-places of the hills along the shores of Prespa, opposite to where St. Chrysostom towered out of the lake, they were still ignorant of what they were expected to do. Most of them thought they were intended for a dash upon some denuded garrison town; perhaps even upon Salonica itself, in hopes of cracking the vaults of a bank or two.

Five hundred men Boris rallied secretly to his standard. Some of them he kept by him in the hills and some he sent to certain hiding-places yet more secure in the great marshes that fringed the edge of the lake. To guard against any discovery of their presence he scattered a line of sentinels, disguised as shepherds, all around this tract of country, who killed every Greek or Pomak who tried to pass in. In this way Boris kept the news of his plans both from the *askares* and from Spiro and the Abbot John in St. Chrysostom.

When he struck it was like a bolt from the blue to the *andari* in St. Chrysostom. On the tenth day after the rallying call was sent out Boris brought all his men down to the edge of the lake at dusk, and embarked them upon boats he had hidden in the reeds.

Then they sailed across an arm of the lake to the side upon which stood the monastery; and from the landing-place it may have been two hours' fast march along the shore until they came to the village of Nici, where it was inevitable that they should be discovered. But Boris gave scant attention to the villagers. Such as got themselves in the way his men shot ruthlessly. Those who stayed in their houses escaped unscathed, for Boris had published to all his men that this was not an expedition against defenseless folk, but against the *andari* and the wicked monks who used them for their political advantage.

Now to understand how the fight went, you must know that this Monastery of St. Chrysostom—which is one of the very strongest buildings in all Macedonia, as has been said—rises abruptly from the shore of the Lake Prespa, a ragged quadrangle of heavy stone buildings, all joined together by a high wall, without any windows below three times a man's height from the ground. About it stood a number of outhouses in which dwelt Spiro and Helya and such of the *andari* as chanced to be in the neighborhood. When these heard the spatter of firing that broke out as the *chetniks* rushed Nici they made for the Monastery, and the great doors were bolted shut behind them.

Boris strung out his five hundred men in a great half-circle from shore to shore of the lake, not forgetting to post lookouts in his rear to guard against a surprise by *askares* and to cow the people of Nici.

It was all the work of a few minutes. Then, with a dozen of his own best rifles, he crept through the shadows past the outhouses and into a clump of bushes within hail of the gate.

"Ho!" he called. "Is Spiro, the son of Vlacho the Shepherd, there?"

"Who wishes to speak to Spiro?" answered a deep voice from the walls.

"I am called Boris Gritcheff," answered the *voivode* grimly.

"I am John, Abbot of this holy building," answered the deep voice. "Spiro, my nephew, is elsewhere engaged at this present. Now, I charge you, tell me what you are doing before my monastery."

"I am contemplating its destruction," returned Boris politely.

The Abbot John laughed so that the Bulgars a hundred yards away could hear every rumble that shook his frame. He was a very huge man and stout, with a long beard that swept his belly. He laughed with all his heart, but this did not anger Boris Gritcheff.

"I have been charged with the destruction of this place as a nest of murderers and trouble makers," he pursued evenly.

The Abbot John roared again.

"Well spoken, Bulgar! But others have thought to open the doors of St. Chrysostom before this—and died."

As he spoke there came a swift, pelting rush of feet from the right. It was Spiro and his *andari*, who had issued out of a little side door in the building of the monastery called the storehouse, thinking to surprise Boris as he talked with the Abbot.

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And the surprise would have been successful, too, had it not been that one of the *chetniks* with Boris had his dynamite bomb ready in his hand, and hurled it straight into the faces of the Greeks.

As fortune would have it they were in a bunch at the time, and the bomb dropped in their middle, blowing half of them to bits. The rest turned and fled as they had come, lashed by streams of Mannlicher bullets.

In this way was the fight opened. The explosion of the bomb was the signal for a general fire upon the monastery walls, but Boris knew that he could not accomplish his end by such means.

He sent back men to the lake with horses from Nici, and caused them to drag up many cases of dynamite he had brought over in the boats. These cases he placed in the shelter of the outhouses under the monastery walls, and then he went from point to point, instructing his men gradually to stop shooting until at last there should be silence. Then when he fired his rifle three times they were to begin again all at once and firing as fast as they could, so that the Greeks would have no opportunity to fire back.

So they did; and when the firing swelled again until the noise was like the pealing of great thunder clouds torn asunder by contending giants, Boris and Stephanoff the Minstrel, who tells this tale, and twelve others of the Gritcheff *cheta*, took each a case of the dynamite and ran toward the gate. All reached it in safety, put down the dynamite cases, and ran back. Only two were struck returning before they reached shelter.

Then Boris had one of his men take a bomb in a leather sling and throw it into the gateway. This was the undoing of the Greeks for the bomb burst in the pile of dynamite, making an explosion that could be heard for twenty miles and that tore a hole in the ground almost as deep as the walls of the monastery had been high. But the walls and dirt falling in again made a sloping breach and up this Boris Gritcheff led the *chetniks*.

Some of the buildings had caught fire and blazed up to the sky, throwing a ruddy light over the wrecked walls and gateway and the masses of *chetniks* swarming after Gritcheff. Many of the Greeks had been killed; but some few yet stood on top of the breach, and in front of them were the Abbot and Spiro. At first the Greeks fired into the *chetniks* as they came into the breach, but presently, when their magazines were emptied, they had to give all their time to the bayonet.

That was a great fight. Men said afterward that never was a greater fought in Macedonia since the revolution began. The Abbot John stood in front of his monks and *andari* with a long Gras rifle in his hands; and sometimes he smote with the butt and sometimes with the bayonet, but always he struck down a man. And as he smote he sang a song that made his men fight all the harder. So it went:

Go back to your masters,
Tell those who sent you—
Tell them, O Bulgars,
We smote off your heads.

Fly from our valiant arms,
Fly from our courage.
We who have mastered you
Fear you no more.

There were many stanzas, each more savage than the other, and as he sang the Abbot put into it the story of how he killed each man that came before him. That was bad work.

Many *chetniks* fell in the breach, until the stones and earth were slippery with blood. For besides the Greeks at the top of the breach who fought with the butt and the bayonet there were others, led by Helya, who fired down from each side without fear of harm, because the *chetniks* and the monks and *andari* were so close together that the men Boris had left behind him did not dare to fire at the walls. For these reasons the attack failed.

WHEN the Bulgars had drawn off, Boris called together his *voivodes* and counted up the slain. It was a heavy toll; and Boris asked them with a sick heart if they should give up the fight, for he did not seek to sacrifice men against their will. But all answered that they would stay until one side or the other was destroyed.

"Then, brothers, we must lose no time," said Boris; "for the noise of the explosion will bring *askares* before dawn."

All agreed to this, and it was arranged to charge again at once, before the Greeks could have much rest.

This time the Bulgars prepared the way

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with a shower of hand bombs, which they threw ahead of them into the breach so that most of the Greeks were blown to atoms. But a few of the wiser, like Spiro and the Abbot John, dropped down behind the ridge and so escaped. What followed was warm work. The Greeks had placed bayonets, points up, in the wreckage of the breach, and many *chetniks* were stabbed through and through before they knew it. Then Helya and the monks threw hand bombs down among them from the side walls, and shot at them, while the *andari* swung their Gras rifles in a solid line across the opening. But the *andari* were dropping fast, and Boris and a little knot of his own *cheta* were drawing steadily nearer to where the Abbot and Spiro fought in the center of the Greek line.

It was the wish of Boris to cross bayonets with the Abbot, because he saw that he was a worthy fighter; and he cried out to the men in front to let him pass. But before he could gain the place a *chetnik* named Kortsa, who came from Melnik and fought under Yani Sandansky, pressed in from the side and bayoneted the priest under the right arm as he turned to face him. That was the end of the Abbot John. He was a great villain and a brave man.

When this happened the *andari* began to fall back, and Helya cried out to Spiro, her man:

"Now is the time, Spiro! Now! Come to me."

Boris Gritcheff heard this, and he called out angrily to Spiro, as he pushed his way back out of the mêleè:

"Ho, stand there! Stand and fight, Spiro!"

But Spiro shook his head.

"Not this time, Boris."

He ran after Helya across the courtyard of the monastery toward the chapel which is on the lake side; and followed by the foremost of his *chetniks*, Boris brushed aside the few *andari* in his path and ran after him.

There was just sufficient space between them for the Greek to shut the chapel door and bolt it, and a single glance told Boris that it would be a waste of time to try and break it down. He turned again and ran toward the side of the building fronting upon the lake. From an upper window he looked down along the sweep of walls at a small fishing-boat moored to a door that opened on the water from the chapel. Helya, who had been betrothed to him, sat in the bow with a bundle in her arms, and Spiro was casting off the mooring line.

Boris Gritcheff raised his rifle to his shoulder and pulled the trigger, but the hammer clicked harmlessly. The magazine was empty. Then he seized his automatic pistol, and leaning out of the window called to Spiro to stop. The Greek looked up at him through the moonlight that was beginning to whiten the night, and laughed mockingly. Boris Gritcheff fired, and Spiro crumpled up in a heap around the little boat's helm. So died Spiro, son of Vlacho the Shepherd and Captain of the *andari* of St. Chrysostom.

Helya gave a cry, and leaped over the thwarts to where Spiro lay. Simultaneously there sounded a crash, and voices cried out for the *voivode*, saying that the chapel door was down. Boris turned and ran along the shadowy corridors of the monastery to the courtyard, guided by Stephanoff the Minstrel, who had been sent to find him.

The chapel was full of *chetniks*, blood-stained and sweaty, who were saying prayers of thanksgiving for their escape from death, even in this temple of the intolerants; and others who were not praying crowded about the little door that gave upon a landing-stage, staring out at the woman who crouched in the boat with her arms about the body of her man.

Through this crowd Boris shouldered his way, his pistol still in his hand.

"Helya!" he called. "Helya!"

The Stolen Woman looked at him.

"You!" she said. "You——"

The voice of an infant that is hungry and cold wailed from the bow of the boat. Helya stood up, fumbling in the folds of the shawl that was draped across her bosom. . . . She fired so quickly that none saw her hand emerge from the shawl.

Boris Gritcheff swayed, clutched at the shoulder of a man beside him, and coughed back the blood that welled between his lips.

"Stop!" he gasped to the men who stood with rifles raised. "Stop!"

They caught him before he fell, and he motioned to them to hold him upright when they would have laid him down.

"You — have — won — Helya," he said, clearly. "Now—go."

"I am glad," she answered simply.

But the baby cried again, and she busied

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herself with the moorings and the rope of the sail. Presently she cast off, and the boat glided out upon the lake with its cargo of a woman, a baby and a dead man.

Boris Gritcheff sank back heavily into the arms that upheld him.

NOW the strange part of this tale is that nobody has ever heard of or seen Helya the Stolen Woman, daughter of Ilia Staradoff who was headman of Garovna, since she and her baby and the dead man who was her husband sailed out upon Lake Prespa through the moonlight. Some say she and her baby were drowned, and others say that the American missionaries at Salonica took pity on her lot and sent her to America, where she would be safe from Bulgar vengeance.

But Boris Gritcheff was buried by his *chetniks* in front of the breach in the monastery walls, by the light of the fires that destroyed it utterly; and the feud that took so many lives is almost forgotten.

No Friend of Fame

by Edward Elton

WHEN Lemuel P. Baker added a three-story tower effect to the old Baker Block, thus giving Brookfield its first real skyscraper, certain busybodies suggested an ordinance compelling him to put up a fire-escape. Mr. Baker took considerable pains to keep this suggestion from going further than a sub-committee of the town council. It seemed peculiarly fitting to some, therefore, that on the day of the fire Mr. Baker should be immured in the top of his tower, six dizzy stories above Commercial Street.

It was the middle of a lazy August afternoon. Down in the basement, Andrew Jackson Cannefax, Mr. Baker's only hope of rescue in the absence of a fire-escape, was taking a siesta on the leather seat that ran along the back of the elevator. The fire short-circuited the wires to the elevator-bell, and for some time no one could arouse Andrew Jackson.

With his six-odd feet of length folded up a little so that he would fit in the elevator seat, with his smooth chocolate features pillowed on one pink palm, Andrew Jackson Cannefax slept well. He needed the rest, for he had to work hard and he was not used to it; without these snatched naps it is doubtful whether he could have continued his labors as elevator-runner, janitor, scrubman, fireman, engineer, renting agent and office-manager of the new skyscraper.

Several persons skipped down the stairs and hurried out of the building. Their feet made a noise over Andrew's head, and one of them remarked in a loud voice that some one ought to telephone the fire department. But Andrew slept on.

His genial brown face wore something of the beamy look it had worn on that afternoon, less than a month before, when Fortune had made him a hero, and put him to work. He had been drowsing, a sponge for sunshine, over a fish-pole in a secluded corner of Evans' Park Lake; then had come a row-boat containing among others Mr. Lemuel P. Baker; and the boat had turned over because one of the ladies tried to change her seat, and all had come up except Mr. Baker. Andrew Jackson, wading out at the urgent request of the ladies, had found Mr. Baker mixed up with one of the oar-locks, and rescued him just as he was turning purple.

As a token of gratitude, Andrew had received positions in the new skyscraper; though troubled increasingly as the cat-fishing season waned into that which should

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be devoted to seining for carp, he had tried to live up to his glory as nearly everything official in the only skyscraper in southwestern Missouri.

Some one in the street outside called:

"Hey—I bet somethin's caught fire up there! Look at the smoke!"

Several other sets of feet shuffled over Andrew's head.

"Fire!" bellowed a bolder voice, exclamatory and yet with a note of doubt in it that made it not altogether convincing.

"Say—look-a-there! Sure—fire!" It had been a long time since Brookfield had had a fire, and the devouring element had to overcome a lot of skepticism before getting recognition. To command proper attention from Brookfield, a fire would have to extend itself.

There came a pounding on the first-floor door in the elevator shaft, a little way above Andrew's place of rest.

"Hey, theah—you Andy!" called a fussy falsetto voice. "Hey—you Cannefax! Do you heah me, suh?"

But Andrew was accustomed to waken only at the sound of the electric call-bell.

"I'll bet that no-'count niggah is asleep!" complained the same fussy voice. "This heah inclines to be see'ious!"

"Let's tromp around—wake 'im up!" suggested another voice.

A great stromping, with shouts of "Hey, you, Andy!" began above Andrew Jackson's head. At the same time shouts broke out in the street.

THE bell of Brookfield's chemical fire-engine clanged staccato in the distance, and the tumult increased. Half a hundred people, and half a dozen dogs, by the sounds of them, might have foregathered in front of the building.

Inside, the strompers were encouraged to noisier stromping. Andrew stretched himself, yawned and sat up. His brows furrowed as his eyes took in the familiar surroundings of dingy elevator; the look of hunted but dutiful determination that accompanied his waking hours overspread his face.

"Why doan' dey ring de bell?" he complained, slipping his leather palm-guards over his hands and languidly pulling down on the steel cable that ran through the car.

With great deliberation the elevator whined up to the first floor, and he slid back the door.

" 'Scuse me, Colonel—" he apologized to the tall, wrathy Southerner who bounced in at him. Colonel Richard de Forrest Peyton had law offices on the second floor, and was a person of irascibility.

"Whut you mean by bein' asleep—when the buildin's on fiah?" demanded the Colonel so rapidly that his white goatee quivered in the wind of his words. "Whut you mean by pokin' up heah, askin' me to 'scuse you? I got a good mind to lambast you one right in yoh eye, I have! Doan' you know Lemuel Bakah's up theah in the towa waitin' foh you to save 'is life?"

Andrew blinked, coughed, scratched his head, and finally gasped—

"Hones' to goodness, Colonel, I didn'."

"Well, I jus' found it out myself a sho't while ago," admitted Colonel Peyton, forgetting his irritation against Andrew in the peculiar piquancy of Mr. Baker's position. "It like to ovahpowahed me." He stroked his goatee. "That no-'count little Tessie Brooks, she tol' me she run out without thinkin' to call him."

"Mistah *Bakah*—still up *theah?*" murmured Andrew, with the up-and-down intonations of great but impersonal surprise.

"He was takin' a siesta in his private office, and he tol' huh on no account to distu'b him," explained the Colonel. "He was kep' up late las' night. Now, suh, all you got to do is jus' run that cah up theah, an' bring him down!"

Several persons hurried, coughing, down the stairs and out toward the door; a faint acrid smell of burning wood came after them. The Colonel sniffed it like a warhorse and waved his hand upward.

" 'Peahs like you got another chance to distinguish yohse'f, suh! Lose no mo' time—save 'is life!"

"I doan' mind savin' 'is life," said Andrew, glumly adjusting his palm-guards, "but I doan' want to distinguish mahse'f no mo'. Hones' to goodness, Colonel, I ain't entiahly yet got ovah distinguishin' mahse'f that fu'st time, an' if you'll 'scuse me——"

"Do yoh duty, suh!" snorted the Colonel, who had had training in war-time literature. "Remembah yoh reputation! The staihs up theah ah probably a mass o' flames by this time! Much depends on you, suh!"

"Yessuh," admitted Andrew without enthusiasm, and creaked aloft.

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THE car's electric lights had gone out, and as it left the lower doorway it plunged into darkness. Before the passage of the second floor the darkness was heavy with smoke.

Little snapping sounds of a fire taking its time about getting started, and the hissing of water on embers, penetrated the shaft in the vicinity of the third floor. There was more smoke here, too, and a faint red glow came through the ground glass of the shaft door, pricking out the "Mme. Baum, Modiste," in rosy light.

Andrew sneezed.

"Lordy!" he muttered with a faint hint of concern in his voice. "I spec' dat Is'ealite lady done been havin' trouble wif huh combustibles!"

Pungent black smoke got in his windpipe, and he choked. The air was thick and hot and driven in sharp little blasts through the doorway of the creeping car.

Holding his breath during the passage of the fourth story, he slid back the door of Mr. Baker's private office and bolted into the room. A big puff of black smoke followed him in. Choking and panting, he closed the door.

The cloud of smoke that had followed him in wavered away toward the open southward windows; otherwise the place looked casual, calm and every-day. There was no particular uproar from the street, and the sounds of the fire, three stories below, were deadened. A big chromo advertising a fire insurance company hung with its customary askewness between the two eastward windows, and a lazy breeze stirred the newspapers on the mahogany center-table.

Andrew glanced doubtfully over toward the door of the inner office, protected by its big warning:

PRIVATE! THIS MEANS YOU!

As if to assure himself that an attack on Mr. Baker's privacy was warranted, he tiptoed over to the windows overlooking Commercial Street and looked down.

Through the wavering film of black smoke drifting away from the third-story windows, a roar of approbation and encouragement broke out to greet him; the many upturned faces seemed to have been waiting for him to appear.

"Good work, Andy!"

"Ye-yah!"

"What's the matter with Cannefax!"

"Do yoh duty, suh!" yelled Colonel Peyton, wildly waving his Panama. "The eyes of all Brookfield ah upon you!"

Andrew fell back with the pained expression of a hound dog that has unintentionally attracted the attention of a ball game. Though on a considerably larger scale, the reception was much like one he had experienced when, not exactly understanding what it all meant, he had dragged a certain limp and moist gentleman up on the shore of Evans' Park Lake.

Shortly after that the moist gentleman had recovered sufficiently to announce that he would not forget; and he hadn't. From that day Andrew Jackson had not fished for cat, nor seined for carp, nor thought of his soul as in any way his own.

He thrust his head out of the window.

"Say—what's de mattah wif yo-all—I ain't doin' nothin'!" he bawled; but the cheers and shouts broke out again, more rapturously than before.

He withdrew, disgusted to the point of muttering cuss-words to himself.

THE door of the inner office was jerked, and Brookfield's real-estate magnate faced him. Andrew, with an effort, looked pleasant.

"What the Sam Hill! Say, wha'd'ye mean?" demanded Lemuel Baker.

He was short, dignified and plump, with the fore part of his head bald in the manner made familiar by Shakespeare and Hall Caine, and his smooth cheeks had the pink color of a just-wakened baby's. Brookfield called him a Yankee, and close, but Brookfield did not believe in "efficiency first."

"What's going on out there, anyway?" he snapped.

"Nothin', suh—nothin 'tall," Andrew assured him disgustedly; "on'y some no-'count folks has got excited an' thinks I'm savin' yoh life. Some folks is allus makin' a lot o' trouble—fuss an' feathahs——"

But Mr. Baker, after one quick sniff at the atmosphere, had fastened his eyes on the stair door that opened beside the elevator shaft, and become lost in contemplation of it. Small black wisps of smoke eddied away from the cracks, the keyhole sent out a thin, wavering line like that from the lips of a cigarette-smoker; in spite of the breeze from the open windows the air in the room was getting faintly blue.

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"What—fire? Is there a fire?" he asked, made gentle by surprise. "What was that you were saying—about saving my life?"

"I done tol' you, suh, theah ain't a wohd o' truf 'bout me savin'——"

"Look here—is there a fire?" insisted Mr. Baker.

" 'Peahs like they is—but doan you go gittin' excited, suh; I'm jus' followin' Colonel Peyton's o'dahs, so doan you git excited by no ideas I'm doin' nothin' what I ain't."

Andrew's general unhappiness made him look unpleasant. Mr. Baker looked at him and was worried.

"I'm perfectly calm—perfectly calm," he said, while a light sweat beaded out and glistened on his forehead. "We can get down in the car, you think?" He started toward the elevator door. "I want you to understand I appreciate you coming for me like this, Andrew," he said. "I sha'n't forget! You think we can make it all right?"

"Look heah, suh—ef you talk like dat—ef you talk like dat—" protested Andrew with emphasis.

"Yes, yes— I'll talk any way you please!" agreed Mr. Baker, somewhat dazed.

He opened the elevator door enough to admit a belch of smoke, and stepped back, waving his hands before his face.

"That's bad—very bad!" he puffed. "The stairs — can't we get down the stairs?"

"De staihs is nothin' but a mass o' flames, suh," quoted Andrew. "No, suh, we got to go down in de elevatah, like Colonel Peyton said. Of cohse dey's a little smoke——"

He took Mr. Baker by one arm and urged him toward the elevator door.

"But all you got to do is jus' hol' yoh bref—like you was takin' a long dive, you know—till we git a little ways down. Now jus' as soon as I open de doh, you jump right in an' hol' yoh bref. Ah you ready, suh?"

"Yes, yes; I suppose there's nothing else for it," said Mr. Baker, with great nervousness. "Remember that I—I confide in your judgment, Andrew."

ANDREW slid back the door and plunged through the smoky blast between car and shaft and into the less smoky interior of the car; Mr. Baker stumbled after. Creaking protests, the car began to creep downward.

"Uf! Uf! It's slow!" protested Mr. Baker, dancing around the floor of the car behind Andrew's back.

"Hol' yoh bref, suh!" ordered Andrew.

"Uf! Don't be a fool!" snorted Mr. Baker, who was plump and didn't have much breath to hold.

They passed the fourth floor and slid into real smoke and heat. On the third floor, the fire had gained headway enough to break the glass in Mme. Baum's shaft-door; they heard it crash, and the opening belched flame-reddened smoke at them as they passed.

"Git down on yoh knees, suh!" choked Andrew, dropping down beside his cable.

Mr. Baker did as he was told. With a grinding of the iron guides that the heat had robbed of grease, the downward speed lessened. The grinding, the harsh bite of metal on metal, increased. As the ground-glass of the second-story door came in sight, the car stopped altogether.

"Break—glass!" gasped Mr. Baker, struggling to his feet.

He aimed a kick at the glass of the door, level with the car's floor; but his shoes were soft, and he did no damage. Andrew launched one of his brogans against the glass and sent it crashing. Kneeling on the car floor, coughing and puffing in the smoke, he knocked the remaining jags of glass inward.

"Now, Mr. Bakah—jus' slide!" he sputtered.

But Mr. Baker had collapsed on the leather seat that ran along the back of the car.

Andrew lifted and steered him, as if he had been a bag of bran, through the opening and into the front office of Willis Brothers, Dentists. Lowered gently by his trousers and feet, any danger of a broken neck in his head-down descent was avoided. Andrew came after, feet first, and made for the windows over the street.

He filled his lungs with fresh air, oblivious of Mr. Baker, and for a moment oblivious of the roar that greeted him from the street, a scant twenty feet below.

Colonel Peyton's voice of clear-cut authority brought him back to his responsibilities.

"Whut's the mattah?" yelled the Colonel, extending arms, shoulders, fiery face and waving Panama above the crowd. "Do you heah me, suh? Whut's the mattah?"

"Dat ol' cah—done stuck in de shaft,"

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explained Andrew Jackson, disgusted and gasping.

"Wheah's Mr. Bakah?"

"Aw, he's heah," said Andrew. "I jus' lef' him a minute while I——"

"Get the life-net!" bellowed some one behind the Colonel.

"Get him out at once, suh!" ordered Colonel Peyton, scarlet with excitement and his crane-necked position.

The crowd surged around the big net, a contraption that looked like several hammocks strung across a big shiny steel hoop. There was shouting and pounding of the pavement, but the Colonel's voice was keen enough to cut through the uproar:

"Get him out at once! Make him jump in the net! Do you heah me, suh? Whut you standin' theah foh?"

Andrew Jackson, soothed by fresh air and the proximity of the ground until he was once more his natural, unexcitable self, returned to Mr. Baker.

The less smoky air of the office had revived Mr. Baker. The fire was above them now, and its upward draft drew fresh air in at the open windows. Mr. Baker sat upright on the floor, breathing chokily, staring around with wide, astonished eyes.

Andrew Jackson eyed him distastefully, but spoke soft.

"You heah whut de Colonel's jus' been sayin'? All you got to do is jus' jump down in dat good solid fiah-net, an' we's fru wif all dis confabalation. Now dat's all you got to do."

He pushed a chair up against the window and returned to Mr. Baker.

"Now you jus' step up in dat chaih," he ordered, competently assisting Mr. Baker to rise, "an' de net's right deah, holdin' out its arms like to you. Come along, suh—o'dahs is o'dahs!"

He got Mr. Baker over to the chair; roars from the street to "Hurry up!" made him strong to lift Mr. Baker bodily, like a lay-figure, up into the chair-bottom. Mr. Baker was thoroughly subordinate and before Andrew's masterfulness displayed no will of his own.

Andrew put one foot on the window-sill, the other on the chair, and helped his employer in bending and getting out to the wide stone sill outside, hurrying him along and holding onto his coat-tails the while. The crowd roared encouragement and assorted directions.

Mr. Baker seemed suddenly to be taken with qualms.

"Wait!" he gasped, catching at the window-panes and gulping chokily for air.

"Wait—I can't——"

"Come on out, you Andy!" ordered the Colonel. "Whut you doin? *He'p* him, suh!"

ANDREW JACKSON, muttering objections, crawled through the narrow space left beside Mr. Baker's legs and stood on the outer sill beside him. The big round net, upheld by two dozen gaping volunteers, was perhaps fifteen feet below. As Andrew appeared all sounds died away into a wide, gawking silence of expectation.

Mr. Baker made an uncertain effort to get back into Willis Brothers' office, but Andrew restrained him.

"*He'p* him, Andrew—*he'p* him!" urged the Colonel's voice, low and quivering with suspense. "Don't you see he ain't entirely hisse'f yet? Jus' take a-holt of him, an *he'p* him a little!"

"Yessuh," said Andrew, much worried but still obedient; and took a firm grip of Mr. Baker in the neighborhood of where his suspenders fastened in the rear.

"That's right!" said the Colonel, in the gasping silence that followed this procedure. "That's right! Now—jus' be easy—jus' ease him down—an' watch out—easy, you Andy, easy!"

Mr. Baker seemed to have lost his voice, and most of his powers of movement, but he squirmed.

"Ef you wiggle like dat, suh," Andrew warned him with Job-like impatience, "I'm liable to miss de net wif you, spite of all I kin do. Now, suh, off you go!"

They balanced on the sill, with divided intentions; the crowd, awakening to the need for further directions, began to give them in a composite roar:

"Shove——"

"Let 'im——"

"—'im, Andy!"

"—'is breath!"

"Now——"

"Shove!"

"—wait!"

"Hurry up!—Wait!—Pull 'im round!—Be easy!"

Andrew gave up his attempt to pry Mr. Baker's fingers loose from the window-casing, and turned to face the crowd. He

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was indignant; he was even unexpectedly enraged.

"Shut yoh moufs—shut yoh moufs!" he roared, making wild motions with the hand that was not engaged with Mr. Baker's suspender-fastening. When an amazed silence fell, he continued: "You jus' 'ten' to holdin' up dat-ah net, an' leave dis-heah mattah to me! Ef you doan' shut up, I sweah I'll let Mr. Bakah go back in de office, an' we'll bof *walk* down de *staihs*, an' not *bovvah* wif yoh ol' net a' *tall!*"

AFTER contemplating for a moment the breathless stupefaction spread by his words, he turned back to Mr. Baker.

"Now, suh, it's jus' simply up to you——"

He began in a voice fresh with victory and strong with determination to brook no further delay; but events of great rapidity made the rest of his remark unimportant.

Whether Mr. Baker lost his balance in a sudden violent effort to duck back through the window, and, in losing it, threw both arms around Andrew Jackson's neck——

Or was dislodged by Andrew, and caught by the neck in falling——

Or Andrew lost his balance and clung to Mr. Baker——

Or Mr. Baker, of his own accord and free will, jumped so suddenly that Andrew did not have time to release him——

These are matters that no Brookfield historian, probably, will ever get the straight of. There are authorities for all four explanations of what immediately followed, and no one can afford to take sides lightly in a matter that divided Brookfield into four camps for many days.

At any rate, it is certain that Andrew Jackson Cannefax and Lemuel P. Baker, interlocked in the vicinity of their necks, went down into the net, straight down twenty feet, or fifteen at the least; and that, to the honor of the town, even that unusual weight was checked before it reached the sidewalk.

On the authority of *The Evening Democrat*, they landed lightly as feathers; the bruises that both afterward displayed were more than accounted for by their collisions in mid-air.

For a moment they lay quiet in the net, like two large, lethargic fish. Andrew was the first to rise; and several misguided bystanders began to pound congratulations on his back.

For the second time that afternoon, and in his known life, Andrew showed irritation that amounted to anger.

"Doan' you touch me—doan' nobody touch me!" he sputtered, rolling his eyes furiously and working arms and shoulders to get himself free. "Lemmee go! I'm plumb sick an' disgusted, I am! Doan' nobody say a *wohd* to me!"

He loped away, and not even Colonel Peyton dared to interrupt him. While Mr. Baker was explaining that his insurance removed all cause for worry about the fate of the building, the outskirts of the crowd decided that it would have been possible for him and Andrew to come down the stairs, since the fire was all above them when they reached the second floor. Andrew later settled this quibble once and for all by explaining that, in such case, there would have been no chance to test the fire-net.

For himself, Andrew steadily declined all credit for what he had done. Only after much heckling did he admit that, if Mr. Baker was determined to remember him, the fire-net would be an acceptable token.

"Wif dat-ah hoop flattened out, squoozetogevvah-like," explained Andrew, "it 'ud make a fu'st-class cahp-seine; an' I aim to do considable cahp-seinin', now I's decided not to 'gage mahse'f in business no longah."

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On Board the Cranston

A Complete Novelette

by George Schuyler Schaeffer

THE *Cranston*, the big, squat tramp-steamer which was to carry Kirke down the Madeira and Amazon Rivers to Para was leaving at daybreak. There were few vessels which penetrated to that little railroad terminus in the heart of a jungle-covered continent, so Kirke, lest he oversleep and wait there another two weeks, went aboard the night before.

His host, the manager of the railroad, accompanied him to the wharf, bade him good-by and stood watching while Kirke crawled fly-like up the rope ladder which hung against the high, black side of the ship.

"Good-by," called Kirke, when he gained the rail. "I've had a bully time up here."

"Good-by," called back the manager. "Pleasant voyage!"

To Kirke, peering through the gloom at the dark deck, the hatch coverings, cables, cargo slings, all the impedimenta with which the ship was littered assumed grotesque, mysterious shapes; the soft lapping of the water on the side sounded as if the ship were continually shivering; the single light which glowed in the port-hole of a deck-house forward was a monstrous eye regarding him with disconcerting fixity.

"A pleasant voyage," Winslow's parting speech, rang in his ears, sounding strangely inadequate. He felt it would be perhaps a notable journey, in what way his intuition did not disclose, but the word "pleasant" scarcely seemed to fit.

"Mr. Kirke, sir."

The deep voice at his shoulder, coming unexpectedly out of the darkness, made him jump.

"Yes," he answered, smiling at his own nervousness.

"Your room is this way, sir. The captain's turned in. He told me to look out for you, sir. I'm the mate."

Kirke was awakened in the morning by a jarring, vibratory sensation which he at first took to be some one shaking his bunk. Then he realized that it was the steam-whistle of the *Cranston* rasping out a farewell to the railroad settlement. He made a hasty toilet and went on deck.

The ship, already in mid-channel, was slowly swinging her nose down-stream. Sailors were coiling down and stowing away mooring lines and clearing up the litter which clogged the decks. Presently the captain's ponderous figure came down the companionway from the bridge.

"Good morning, Mr. Kirke," he said presently. "Come along and have some coffee with me." He cast a backward glance toward the bridge and said as if explaining his leaving, "My job's done now. Couldn't give the helmsman an order if I wanted to. It's up to those pilot chaps."

Over a cup of coffee in the saloon below Captain Wiggars expatiated on the wonders of the river pilotage. To his stolid, unimaginative mind it was the one thing worthy of remark in the whole strange inland voyage.

"It's a miracle, Mr. Kirke. Those two chaps know every reach and bend and shoal in two thousand miles of river, and on the blackest night, too."

Their coffee finished, they returned to the bridge. As the captain reached the top of the companionway he spoke to the pilot on duty.

"Everything all right, Mr. Olivierez?"

The pilot answered with a soft "*Si, senhor*," and resumed his scrutiny of the river ahead. He was a tall, smooth-shaven man in whom lustrous, dreamy eyes seemed

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to contradict a hard, unsmiling mouth. But there was an air of self-contained power about him which made Kirke feel instantly that he was thoroughly competent.

After gazing for a time at the monotonous jungle-covered banks and the turbid stream, Kirke's attention was attracted to a gang of deck-hands who were battening down the covers of the forward hatches. The captain, following his look, remarked in solemn tones—

"There's a few shillings' worth of cargo below there, Mr. Kirke."

"Rubber, isn't it?" remarked Kirke.

"Yes," replied the captain. "And the biggest shipment that's ever come out of this country. One thousand tons—that's four hundred thousand pounds' worth, or two million dollars in your money."

Kirke whistled.

"Who does it belong to?" he asked.

"Two young American chaps who went into the jungle beyond the end of the railroad a year ago. They took their sister with them. Now they've sent out this shipment and she's going down to Manaos with it. That's half way down to the sea, you know, near where the Madeira flows into the Amazon."

"You mean she's aboard now?" asked Kirke, astonished.

"Yes. You'll see her at breakfast. A fine young woman she is, too."

Called away to attend to some detail of the ship's routine, the captain left Kirke speculating curiously about his fellow passenger. A girl who had spent a year in the jungle with a rubber expedition would at the very least be eccentric, he thought. He wondered if she wore knickerbockers, had short hair and smoked a pipe.

BREAKFAST was nearly over when Kirke saw the captain half rise from his seat, make a quick, bobbing bow and point to the empty chair at his side.

"This seat, please, Miss Stevens," he said.

Kirke, following the direction of the captain's look, turned about in his chair and had a momentary picture of a tall, white-garbed girl endowed with a high vitality and physical vigor, which by poise and self-restraint were softened into a magnetic presence and smooth, effortless grace of movement. But he quickly turned back, for he recognized both his own rudeness and that she was not one to accept with equanimity the open stare of a stranger.

Later he noted the masses of gleaming brown hair, the clear brown eyes set far apart and very straight and open in their glance, and the smooth skin burned nut-brown by life in the open, but neither weather-beaten nor coarsened.

"Miss Stevens, gentlemen," the captain enunciated laboriously as she took her seat. "Miss Stevens, this is Mr. Judd, the mate—and Mr. MacKenzie, the chief engineer—and Mr. Olivierez, one of our pilots, and Mr. Kirke, a passenger, ma'am, like yourself."

The girl replied with a smile which included them all and lifted the momentary embarrassment which had fallen on them with her appearance.

"I'm so glad I'm aboard," she said, addressing them through Captain Wiggars. "It's such a great concession for you to take a woman passenger." She turned to Kirke. "And I'm glad there's another passenger like myself."

Kirke, who had just completed an adventurous trip through the hinterland of the continent, had not seen a white woman for six months. Jane Stevens had been in the jungle for a year. So it was quite natural for them to brush aside all preliminary formality and talk freely and intimately from the start. He was eager to hear of her rubber-gathering adventures and how she came to embark on such an enterprise, and she was quite willing to talk about it; and in the slender, alert young man, burned to a saddle color by his own voyage through jungle and mountain, she found a listener who was both comprehending and congenial.

"It was a case of have to," she told him when they went on deck after breakfast.

"That is, it was for Blair and Bob—my two brothers, you know. They needed the money. They had failed in business and owed a lot more than they could pay. They didn't believe in a bankruptcy whitewash. Then along came a Peruvian named Aljandro Gurri with an offer to take them to a big rubber tract he'd discovered if they'd get up the expedition. They got the creditors to consent, put in what they had left from the wreck and came down."

"And you—" queried Kirke.

"Oh, I couldn't keep out of it. You see the boys and I have always been together on

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everything. I couldn't stay at home tatting while they hustled to retrieve the family fortunes."

Kirke smiled at the extremely competent-looking young woman in the deck-chair.

"And now you have won out," he said.

"Yes," she replied. "There's a lot of rubber on board this ship. In four days now we'll be in Manaos and it will be turned into really and truly money."

"And your brothers are bringing more?" he asked.

"No, this is the lot. We're finished. Bob is staying behind to round up all the outfit. Blair was coming down with the rubber, but at the last moment we got word from an outlying camp that Gurri was down with fever, so he went out to him and I came along by myself."

She went on to tell him something of their experiences. On the whole it had not been as trying as she had expected. The isolation had been the worst; there had been some fever; Gurri, the Peruvian partner, had rather gone to pieces under the strain, and the boys had been afraid he was going to welsh. But now the whole thing was over and everybody happy. Gurri was probably not seriously ill. Everybody had fever off and on in there.

"It must feel pretty good to be slipping down this river with a couple of millions in your pocket," commented Kirke.

"Good!" she exclaimed. "Good! I wonder if you can imagine just how good it does feel? Do you suppose it is possible to buy decent clothes in Manaos?"

In the afternoon while Miss Stevens took a nap, Kirke passed the time on the bridge. There he met Santos, the other pilot, a roly-poly chattering little Brazilian with twinkling, humorous eyes and a caustic wit.

II

THAT night at one o'clock the two passengers had gone to bed. The captain, uneasy over navigating his ship in inland waters, was lying awake and dressed in his bunk. Judd, the first mate, was snoring through his watch below. Olivierez had been relieved by Santos and had turned in. With Santos, the second mate and a quartermaster on the bridge, the *Cranston* slid quietly down the black river.

It was so dark that only the keenest eyes could pick out the shadow of deeper black that marked the line of the distant shore. To sharpen the sight of those on the bridge the whole boat was plunged in darkness.

Presently the mate left the bridge and went to the galley to get a cup of coffee. There was none ready and he woke the boy and waited below while it was prepared.

On the bridge Santos walked over to the man at the wheel.

"You see that point o' land jutting out dead ahead?"

The helmsman peered into the gloom until he distinguished where the broad line of the black bank tapered into a point far ahead of the ship.

"Aye, aye, sir," he answered.

"Straight toward it until she's close in. I'll give you the word when to go over."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The pilot crossed to the port end of the bridge and settled his fat little body in the comfortable depths of a steamer-chair. The great bulk of the steamer plowed steadily and quietly through the murk.

From time to time sounds grated on the smooth silence of the night; a shovel clanged in the stoke-hold; an ash-hoist rattled and creaked; on the deck below a man cried out in his sleep; and always the steady beat of the ship's engines, which seemed not so much to break the silence as to gather it together and throw it out rhythmically.

"She's coming under the point, sir," called the man at the wheel.

Santos stirred himself with the pettish laziness of the fat man.

"She's all right. Hold her steady a while yet."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The *Cranston* drew steadily nearer to the black mass which marked the point.

"Swing her out, sir?" asked the helmsman.

Santos did not answer.

"Blime if the beggar ain't gone to sleep," muttered the man indignantly. "I say, sir," his voice rose to an anxious treble, "shall I swing her? The land's close in, sir, she'll——"

With disconcerting suddenness the wheel smote the quartermaster in the chest and knocked the wind out of his body. Simultaneously there burst on the night a tremendous uproar compounded of the clanging of metal, the creaking and groaning of woodwork, the crash of breaking glass and

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china and, weaving through it all, the sharp barking of a frightened dog. The *Cranston* had run hard aground.

Even before he caught a full breath the quartermaster jumped to the engine-room telegraph and threw it to "full speed astern." The jangling of the signal bell had not ceased before the captain had bounded up the ladder to the bridge. He grabbed the handle and threw the signal to "stop."

"Ye fool!" he jerked out. "D'ye want to back her off and sink her in deep water?"

As the confusion of inanimate things ceased, a human babel took its place. The deck-hands tumbled out of the fo'c's'le; stokers swarmed up from the bowels of the ship; the mates ran for the bridge; cook, steward, cabin-boy, all the ship's company piled out on the dark decks, a chaotic, terrified throng.

But Wiggars, the stolid and stupid, had sailed the sea for forty years, and for half that time had commanded a vessel—and himself.

"Stop yer noise!" he bellowed from his post on the bridge. "Mr. Judd, stand by yer anchor! Mr. Andrews, clear away the starboard boat and have 'er ready to lower! Mr. MacKenzie, get yer hands back in the engine-room! Carpenter, sound the well! And you, bo's'n, arm your lead and find out what the bottom is hereabouts!"

The captain crashed out his orders like the shots of a rapid-fire gun, and as each one struck it brought an answering "Aye, aye, sir." In twenty seconds the confusion had ceased.

"Now," muttered the captain, "where's the —— pilot who did it?"

Kirke was awakened by being thrown from his berth to the floor. He was a cool-headed young man, and so in a very few seconds he realized what had happened and knew there could be no great danger. His first thought, then, was to find Miss Stevens and reassure her, for she would doubtless be terrified, and the ship's people would be too busy to think of her. He hastily threw on some clothes and ran out of his room.

The *Cranston* had four spare cabins in her saloon quarters, two on each side. Kirke occupied one on the starboard side and the two pilots another on the port side. Which of the two others was Miss Stevens's he did not know, so he first went to the one next his own. A vigorous pounding on the door brought no response, and trying the knob showed him that the room was locked.

As soon as he knocked on the door of the port cabin she called out:

"I'm coming. What's happened?"

"We've run aground," he answered, "but it's all right. There's no danger. You had better put something on and come out."

As he finished speaking she opened the door and stepped out dressed in a kimono and with her hair hanging down below her waist in a heavy braid.

"Don't worry about me," she said, smiling. "I'm not a bit frightened. Thank you for thinking of me though," she added.

"We had better go outside and find out just how badly we are on," he said.

He led the way along the alleyway which opened on the after well-deck. Just as they stepped outside he saw the captain's heavy figure coming down the ladder from the deck above. Behind him were two men awkwardly carrying something heavy and limp. By the dim light which filtered out of the galley windows the captain saw the two passengers standing in the shadow below. He stopped quickly and cast a look over his shoulder.

"Ask Miss Stevens to go back to her room," he said nervously to Kirke.

She heard him.

"Why—what—I'm all right here," she protested.

"Ask her to go to her room," repeated the captain in a voice which did not seem sure of itself.

Kirke saw the sailors' burden.

"Do as he says, please," he whispered to her.

"Very well," she assented, and walked back to her cabin.

"Who is it, captain?" asked Kirke soberly as the two men went inside the saloon.

"The pilot Santos."

"Badly hurt?"

"He's dead, man; as dead as dagger in his heart can make him."

III

THEY laid Santos on the couch, and then the captain showed Kirke the knife he had withdrawn from the man's breast—a stiletto with a long, thin blade no wider than a lead-pencil at the haft and tapering to a needle-point. A child could bury it to the hilt in a man's body and be unconscious of the effort.

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As soon as he had straightened out the disorder which broke loose when the ship struck, the captain said he had looked for the man who had been responsible. He had found the pilot's deck-chair jammed hard against the forward rail of the bridge where the shock had doubtless thrown it, and Santos himself in a huddle beside it. At first he had thought the man drunk; then he had noticed the dark stains on his white jacket and seen the handle of the knife sticking out of his breast.

The captain and Kirke were gazing silently at the body when the door of the pilot's room opened and Olivierez stepped out. His head was bound up in a towel and one hand was bandaged.

"Captain, it is—" he began, and then broke off as he saw what was on the couch. With horror on his face he came across the saloon, questioning them with his eyes.

"He's dead," said the captain, showing him the knife and pointing to the wound in the dead man's breast.

Olivierez, looking down at the couch, crossed himself. After a minute's silence he muttered—

"The best pilot on the river—no wonder!"

"What d'ye mean?" the captain asked.

"I think," answered Olivierez solemnly, "if I put a ship ashore I should want to do as he has." He saw the captain's incredulous stare and went on. "We pilots have our pride, captain. We are held to be the aristocracy of the river, and we so hold ourselves. To put a great ship like this ashore —well—one feels it. Poor Santos did, at least."

There was an awkward silence, broken when the captain suddenly noticed Olivierez's battered appearance.

"What's happened to you?" he asked.

"I was turning down my light when she struck," was the answer. "It threw me against the lamp-bracket. My hand and head were cut a little."

For the time there was nothing more to do except to cover up the body and send for the carpenter to come and take measurements for a coffin. In the tropics such things must not be delayed.

Meanwhile there was the ship to be attended to. Fortunately she had struck a soft mud bottom. In the engine-room a good deal of miscellaneous damage had been done, but nothing irreparable, and the hull was uninjured. So much was good. But she was stuck hard and fast on the mud-bank.

Early in the morning the body of Santos was taken ashore and buried.

When they came back to the *Cranston* the captain asked Kirke to come to his own cabin.

"Now, Mr. Kirke," said the skipper after they had settled themselves, "what do you think of it?"

Kirke watched his cigar smoke as it hung in an unmoving cloud in the still air of the cabin.

"I'll be hanged if I know, captain," he answered finally.

"Do you suppose Santos did kill himself because he put the ship aground? Or, did we go aground because he was dead?"

Kirke shook his head perplexedly.

"They both seem unreasonable," he commented. "Consider the latter alternative: suppose some one did kill him. Who was it?"

"There you are," replied the skipper. "You can't explain it. All hands on this ship are Britishers. Now your Britisher would never use one o' those murderous knives, not even if he was wishful to kill."

"That leaves Miss Stevens, Olivierez and me to choose from. We can leave the lady out of it. As for myself, there doesn't seem to be any particular reason why I should murder a man I'd never seen before. Then there's Olivierez." He stopped.

The captain watched his own cigar smoke for half a minute.

"What do you think?" he ventured at length.

"But why should he?" replied Kirke. "The two were good friends. Then, too, Olivierez is a pilot. He would have known the ship's position and would not have done it when she was sure to run aground as a consequence."

"Unless to give a chance for the theory of suicide."

"But he couldn't have been sure that things would come out as they did. Santos might have been discovered dead before the ship actually struck. Or, more likely, some one on the bridge might have run to the pilot the instant she hit and seen that he was dead then."

"But the suicide idea looks queer. Santos must have known that she hit on mud and wasn't badly damaged. I don't believe the blow to his precious pride would

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have been enough to make him kill himself —anyhow not before he'd time to think over it a bit."

"You're right, captain," assented Kirke. "So that forces us back to the idea of a murder. And by elimination the cloud seems to hover over our friend Olivierez."

The captain nodded without meeting Kirke's eyes. He rose slowly to his feet.

"Well, thank you, Mr. Kirke, for thrashing it out with me." He still avoided Kirke's glance. "I'll keep my eyes open for a bit," he added with a queer note in his voice that Kirke at first failed to comprehend, though it hung in his ears even after he was out on the deck.

"I'll be hanged if I don't think he suspects me!" he ejaculated mentally. "Of all the nerve!"

IV

KIRKE spent the greater part of the afternoon with Miss Stevens. After speculating briefly and fruitlessly on the cause of the tragedy that subject was put in the background. It was the plight of the ship which they discussed for the most part.

At five o'clock a trial at backing the ship off was made, with no more result than to stir up a vast amount of mud at the vessel's stern. As darkness came soon after six, nothing more was done that day.

Miss Stevens took the delay philosophically.

"We'll get to Manaos eventually, I suppose," she said. "And meantime there is no chance of the rubber getting away."

That night just as he was falling asleep Kirke thought he heard some one moving about in the vacant room next his own. It was very probable that Olivierez had changed his quarters, he reflected, for what little breeze there was came from the port side. But next morning when Kirke came out of his room he met Olivierez coming out of his own cabin across the saloon.

"Hot last night, wasn't it?" remarked Kirke. "You shifted over to my side of the boat for the breeze, didn't you?"

"No," answered Olivierez. "I slept all night in my own room."

"I heard rats, then, I dare say," said Kirke, dismissing the subject from his mind.

After breakfast Olivierez had himself rowed to a rubber-gatherers' shack half a mile down the bank. Here he procured a canoe. With this craft, which he preferred because it was so much handier than the heavy ship's boats, and two natives to handle it, he found a suitable spot astern of the *Cranston* to put down an anchor.

Two of the ship's boats carried a light anchor out and lowered it. A line was passed over the stern to a steam-winch and in five minutes the *Cranston* pulled herself into deep water.

Captain Wiggars dropped a bow anchor to keep the ship from drifting down-stream, while he rerigged the stern line and made ready to hoist aboard the anchor which had pulled him off. Olivierez dismissed his canoe and came scrambling up the side, his olive face aglow with excitement.

"We're off, sir," he called to the captain.

"Aye, aye," responded the skipper. "Now we'll be on our way again."

The pilot pointed up-stream.

"No," he said, "not yet. Look at that."

At the upper edge of the long reach where the water joined the sky lay a wide, dark ribbon of cloud with jagged, wind-torn edges. As they watched, it rose higher in the sky, and the water under it changed from gleaming yellow to dark purple.

"A squall," said Olivierez. "We'll have to lie at anchor until it passes. The rain will be too thick for me to see to steer."

With astonishing rapidity the storm swept down on them. First came the wind, and behind it a solid wall of gray rain, which crashed down on the ship and in an instant blotted out everything else in the world. From the bridge of the *Cranston* not a thing could be seen but the falling water—shore, sky, even the surface of the river were invisible.

The din was terrific. The beating of the rain on deck and awning made a steady roar, which blended with the hissing that rose from the water all around.

The captain, Olivierez and a quartermaster took refuge in the chart-house back of the bridge.

"It won't last long, will it?" the skipper bawled in the pilot's ear.

"No," was the answer. Then in a moment he shouted to the captain, "I'm going aft to look at the stern line to make sure we're not drifting."

The captain nodded and Olivierez dashed out into the torrent.

Kirke and Miss Stevens were standing in the passageway from the saloon, watching

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the storm. They saw Olivierez come down the ladder from the deck above, make his way aft along the well-deck, and climb the ladder to the poop. Then they lost sight of him.

"Must be something up," said Kirke. "Those fellows don't usually get wet for a joke."

Miss Stevens shook her head uncomprehendingly and Kirke repeated his remark, shouting it in her ear.

She nodded and he saw her lips form the words, "I wonder what it is." Then suddenly her whole body stiffened.

"What—" began Kirke and quickly broke off.

Piercing the roar and rattle of the deluge came a long, high-pitched, despairing cry—the shout of a man overborne by some mortal peril.

For an instant Kirke stood as still as if the sound had paralyzed him. Then he ran rapidly toward the poop. As he climbed the ladder the rain redoubled its violence and he could see scarcely ten feet from him.

"Hello, there!" he yelled. "What's up? Where are you?"

His words were engulfed in the descending torrent and there was no sound in answer except the diapason of the storm. He groped about the streaming deck and could find no living soul, until, turning about, he discerned the figure of Miss Stevens just behind him.

"You must get inside!" he shouted. "You'll get wet."

Her lips curved into a smile as she looked down at her streaming skirts, as wet as if she had plunged into the river.

"Where did he go?" she called.

Kirke opened the door in the hood which covered the top of the companionway. Sitting on the stairs were the second mate and a sailor.

"Did you hear any one yell up here, Mr Andrews?" asked Kirke.

"What's that?" called the mate.

"Did you hear any one up here?" repeated Kirke at the top of his voice.

Andrews shook his head.

"No," he bawled. "What with the noise of the rain on the deck you can't hear a —— thing not a——"

He stopped suddenly as he saw Miss Stevens over Kirke's shoulder.

Kirke told him of seeing Olivierez come aft to the poop-deck, of the cry they had heard, and that the pilot could not be found.

"He'll be somewhere all right," said the mate. "But we'd better tell the old man. You go forward and tell him and I'll have a look about. Better have the lady come in here out of it."

Kirke struggled forward to the chart-house and reported to Captain Wiggars.

"He might have gone overboard," said the captain, "though I don't see how it could have happened—not with the ship lying still like she is and him a seafaring man."

The captain routed out all of the deck hands and started them searching the ship for the pilot, except one boat's crew whom he ordered to row about down-stream from the ship.

Just as the boat had been dropped to the water and was being unhooked from the falls the rain stopped with a suddenness which was uncanny. They could see it sweeping down the river in a great gray cloud, and then in another minute the streaming ship was lying in the hot, glaring sunlight.

The men who were hunting over the decks and in every accessible part of the vessel reported to the captain that the pilot was not to be found and the captain ordered the mate in charge of the boat to zigzag down the river and keep a sharp lookout, and then with his glasses swept the surface of the river and the line of the near shore.

Another boat was put out to help in the search, and the two crisscrossed the stream for five miles below the ship. After the first ten minutes no one on the *Cranston* had any hope of finding the pilot. But the hunt was kept up. There was at least a chance of finding his body.

V

WHEN they had changed to dry clothes, Kirke and Miss Stevens met on the upper deck, where they fell to walking back and forth as some slight relief from the strain of hopeless waiting.

"It's impossible!" exclaimed the girl.

"What is?" asked Kirke steadily.

"That it should be an accident," she replied. "Think of it. How could he fall overboard accidentally?"

Kirke shook his head doubtfully.

"It's beyond me," he said.

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"And then, too," she continued, "coming on top of Santos' death it's — well, what do you think? Does it strike you as a mere coincidence?"

"No," he answered. "It doesn't. But it does dispose of one theory. If the two events aren't a coincidence—if they come from the same cause, then Olivierez didn't kill Santos."

"Then who did? And who was responsible for Olivierez's death—if he's dead?"

"I give it up. It's too much for me."

She was silent for a while and then burst out:

"This horrible ship! How thankful I'll be to get off it!"

"Have you thought of one thing?" he said soberly. "We have no pilot now. It's not going to be an easy job getting down the river to Manaos."

She stopped short in her walk and turned a terror-stricken face to him. Then she dropped into a chair, covered her face with her hands and began to cry.

Kirke stood awkwardly in front of her, overcome with sympathy but not knowing what to do or say.

"It'll be all right," he managed to say. "Don't worry. We'll get out of it all right."

Her sobs were the only answer. A wave of tenderness surged over him.

"Look here," he stammered. "It's the deuce of a fix, and rotten luck and all that, I know, but I don't believe anything more is going to happen. And if it should, why, well, you can count on me to stick around and do what I can to help. You know that, don't you?"

His voice rang true. She looked up at him.

"Yes," she answered simply. "I do know it and I am very grateful to you." She rose. "I'm going below now and get over my nerves," she said.

Late in the afternoon the search for the missing pilot was abandoned. Kirke went to see the skipper in his cabin to find out what was going to be done.

Captain Wiggars was in a state of extreme depression with which was blended an irritability which broke out in occasional paroxysms of temper.

"Just to think of it," he wailed. "Here twenty years now I've had my own ship, and nothing like this ever before—and now on my last voyage see what happens to me."

"Is this your last voyage, then?" said Kirke soothingly.

"Yes, if I ever finish it," answered the captain. He went on to tell, with a note of self-pity, of his plans for retiring. How the pension he would earn from the owners, added to a windfall he had recently received, would enable him to live ashore in comfort for the rest of his life. "But there'll be no pension," he complained, "unless I bring the old ship out of this God-forsaken river."

"What are you planning to do now?" asked Kirke.

"Do!" the skipper thundered in a sudden outburst. "What can I do but lie here and curse the day I ever saw this dirty stream and wait for a boat to go by that'll lend us a pilot? I'm not going to take a chance of piling her up again."

The talk shifted to the details of the disappearance of Olivierez.

"You say you saw him go by on his way aft?" the captain asked irritably.

"Yes," answered Kirke. "Then I lost sight of him in the rain. Shortly after, I heard him cry out."

"And you're sure no one followed him?"

"Not a soul went along the deck until I ran aft myself. I'm sure of it."

"And he was gone when you got there? And there was no one else there?" The captain's words came slowly and as he spoke he kept his eyes fixed on the table in front of him while his fingers drummed nervously on the arm of the chair. "You're sure that no one else followed him?" he repeated with the hint of an accent on the "else." "Yet he's not been seen since."

An angry flush spread over Kirke's face.

"Look here, Captain Wiggars," he shot out, "if you mean what you seem to mean, you'd better talk to Miss Stevens. She was standing beside me when he passed and came with me when I followed him. I never left her sight."

The captain spread out both hands in protest.

"No, no, man," he said plaintively. "It's not that. It's not that I've any suspicion." There was a pressure of worry and anxiety in his voice which made Kirke feel that the skipper's nerves were strained to the breaking point. "It's not that I've any suspicion," he repeated half to himself. "But—" he broke out suddenly—"my God! What a mess we're in!"

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VI

THREE days the *Cranston* lay at anchor. They were long days, and hot, and empty. There was plenty of time to think about the double tragedy which had left her marooned there in the middle of a continent. And the more they thought, the more mysterious it grew—and the more portentous.

Miss Stevens and Kirke sat on the shady side of the deck together, walked together and played games together. Kirke grew to have a tremendous admiration for her courage. After the one breakdown he had witnessed she regained her self-control and he saw no more attacks of nerves. They talked but little of their predicament, but when they did she was cheerful and sanguine.

"Of course, nothing more will happen," she would say. "Naturally I'm anxious to get back to civilization to get all this rubber turned into good New York drafts, but I can wait. And the rubber can't run away." And once she said: "And it might be much worse. It helps a lot to have a congenial companion."

To which he replied—

"And it's a great deal to me to know that I'm of any help at all."

The morning of the fourth day an upbound river steamer came by and sent one of her pilots aboard the *Cranston*. He departed in five minutes, protesting that no sum of money could induce him to take charge of a ship on which two pilots had mysteriously lost their lives.

At this Captain Wiggars lost his temper and clenched the pilot's determination by shouting hard words at him as he returned to his own ship. The pilot returned the compliment by accusing the captain of killing his two former pilots.

Miss Stevens, standing beside Kirke, watching and listening, turned a white face to the young man.

"If it weren't so horrible I'd want to laugh," she said. "I quite sympathize with the pilot."

The captain's burst of temper brought an access of energy.

"I'll show 'em there's nothing can beat a British seaman!" he bellowed. "We'll navigate the ship down the river without the help of any of the robbin', murderin' heathen. Get up steam, Mr. MacKenzie! Mr. Judd, take a boat's crew and start making soundings down the river. Rig some buoys from life-preservers and mark the channel with them."

Before the *Cranston* came to anchor for the night she had made twenty miles downstream. For the next three days she made an average of forty miles.

"Four hundred to go," the captain announced at dinner the fourth night. "Ten days and we're in Manaos. Then if while we're unloading your rubber, Miss Stevens, I can't find a pilot to take me down to Para, my name ain't Wiggars."

In the hour she spent on deck talking to Kirke, Jane Stevens was unaffectedly cheerful.

"It makes such a difference being away from the place where those horrible things happened," she said. "And to be moving too; to know that we will get there in a definite time, even if it is a long one."

"I see you have your eye fastened on the Manaos rubber market," laughed Kirke.

"Yes," she admitted, "I have. So would you. I wonder what we'll get for our cargo. Of course it will be a lot, but it can vary one way or the other a good deal."

"I should think," commented Kirke, "that a shipment of this size striking the market all at once would jam the price 'way down."

"Yes, we're prepared for that," she replied. "But even so, it will bring enough, and with the big demand for rubber that has come from the war the price can't go so very low."

That night the *Cranston* lay off a small village, one of the few settlements on the whole length of the river. The captain discussed with Kirke the advisability of reporting to the local authorities the deaths of his two pilots. But they decided against it for fear some petty official would detain the ship while he made a complicated and fruitless investigation. It would be much better, Kirke advised, to wait until they reached Manaos, and there report the matter to the higher judicial authorities, for in Manaos there was an English consul who would protect the interests of the ship.

Kirke slept badly that night. At intervals he heard the rats in the cabin next to his own, and the small boat which lay alongside the ship was continually bumping on the side just under his port-hole. But finally the rats went to sleep or else hunted

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other pastures, the swinging of the ship at her anchor seemed to carry the boat free from her side, and he fell into a light doze.

Toward dawn he was awakened by the same sounds and, reviling the long confinement which had made his nerves so tender, he turned on his light and spent the rest of the night reading. He resolved that thereafter he would sleep in a hammock on deck where at least he would have all of the cool air there was.

Talking about it to Miss Stevens after breakfast, he discovered that she had been sleeping on deck for two nights.

"I got used to a hammock up in the rubber country," she told him, "and it's infinitely better outside than down in those stuffy staterooms." Also she told him that the reason the bumping of the boat had ceased for a time to annoy him had been because some one had taken it to row ashore.

"I sha'n't say anything about it," she remarked, "because it would only get somebody into trouble. It was some sailor, I suppose, who stole off for a midnight spree. I don't believe he found much excitement in that miserable little village."

Kirke was for reporting the matter to the captain, but she absolutely forbade him.

"No," she insisted. "Why get the poor man in a row?"

Because he had nothing better to do Kirke spent some time speculating which of the men aboard had been so eager for an outing that he had run the risk of secretly leaving the ship to investigate the possibilities of a sordid river hamlet. He was undecided between Rogers, the carpenter, an over-smart and oily-tongued young cockney, and Flanagan, a shifty-looking old Liverpool Irishman who was one of the two quartermasters. But, after all, it seemed improbable that one would have gone without the other, for the two appeared to be great friends.

The day passed like all the others. The first mate and his boat with sounding-lead and buoy would mark the channel ahead, the ship would slowly steam from one mark to the other, and as each buoy was passed, another boat, with the second mate in charge, would leave her side and pick it up—slow progress, but at least they were moving, and because the boats had a four-knot current as well as their oars to carry them along, the day's mileage was not inconsiderable.

BY EVENING Kirke, because of his wakefulness the night before, was thoroughly tired out. Shortly after dinner he had a hammock slung on the bridge and betook himself there for a good night's sleep. The rest of the ship's company turned in early too, and when Kirke finished a last cigarette and spread the mosquito-net over his hammock the only man visible was the quartermaster on watch, who stood leaning against the forward rail of the bridge.

"Tough luck, Timmins," remarked Kirke. "Staying up here awake while all the rest of us sleep."

"Well, of course, sir," answered the sailor, "it ain't none too soft. Still, a good sailor wot knows his dooty, sir, 'e sometimes gets a bit of a nap with one eye while the other's open."

Kirke chuckled.

"All right, Timmins, but don't let the skipper catch you, and don't let us run ashore or burn up or anything."

"Trust me, sir," was the reply. "Good night, sir."

Kirke woke up at daylight with Timmins's face bending over his hammock.

"Mr. Kirke, sir. Mr. Kirke, sir," the man whispered hoarsely.

"Yes," answered Kirke stupidly. "What is it?"

As the sleep left his eyes he saw that Timmins was gripped by an overmastering terror. His voice was trembling, his eyes staring, and his unshaven jaw working convulsively.

"Please, sir," the man pleaded, "don't tell no one wot I said last night—about sleepin', I mean, sir. I didn't sleep—not a wink—s'elp me, Gawd—I didn't——"

He suddenly broke off and turned his back to Kirke as Andrews sprang up the ladder.

"The captain'd like to see you in his cabin right away, Mr. Kirke," said the mate, his voice shaking with excitement.

"What's the matter?" demanded Kirke. "What's happened?"

"The captain'll tell you, sir," was the only reply.

Kirke went down to the captain's room on a run. He found the skipper pacing across the short stretch from his bunk to his table. He was still clad in his pajamas, and his gray hair and beard were tousled and rumpled.

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"Come in," he shouted, as he saw Kirke at the open door. He glared fiercely at him for an instant and then suddenly sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands. "God's curse is on this ship and on me," he muttered brokenly.

"What's the matter, man?" Kirke jerked out.

"Another one gone," mumbled the captain.

"For God's sake!" exclaimed the younger man, shaking the captain's shoulder. "Talk plain language. Who's gone?"

"Miss Stevens."

VII

AT FIRST Kirke felt as if every function of his body were suspended. His heart no longer beat, his blood became stagnant in his veins, a choking in his throat stopped his breath, his brain ceased entirely to think. Gradually this cleared away. Gradually he saw that if any one were to handle the situation it must be he—the man who sat before him was prostrated by the shock.

Kirke took a chair.

"Now, then, captain," he began, "tell me all about it—exactly what you *know* has happened, not what you surmise or guess."

"There's little enough to tell," said the captain dismally. "When the cook turned out half an hour ago he went on deck for a blow of fresh air and saw that her hammock was empty. Thinking she was up and might like a drop of coffee, he went to her room. She wasn't there. He reported to me and Judd and Andrews and I have looked all over the ship. She's not aboard."

The skipper finished his recital and jumped to his feet. He shook his fist in the air above his head and cried—

"It's God's curse on me!"

"Steady," commanded Kirke. "Sit down and keep your nerve. When was she last seen?"

Captain Wiggars, once more sunk in dejection, replied:

"She turned in on the starboard side of the hurricane deck about the time you did. While she's sleeping there every one has orders to keep away, so it wasn't until the cook went on deck that anything was known."

"Who was awake on the ship last night?"

"Timmins was on watch from eight until midnight; then Flanagan until four o'clock, when Timmins went on again."

"Did they hear anything?"

"They swear they didn't hear a sound."

"Have all the other men been asked whether they heard anything—a cry or a splash?"

"Yes, we've been over 'em all. Not a man of 'em heard a thing."

"And the two boats? They weren't hoisted aboard last night. Are they still fast alongside?"

"They're just as they were left," the captain answered. A convulsive shudder ran over his body. "It's God's curse on me," he mumbled. "I might 'a' known it."

"For Heaven's sake, stop moaning about yourself!" flared up Kirke. "Who cares whether God's curse is on you or not? The thing to do is to find out what has happened to Miss Stevens."

"Ah, but you don't understand," wailed the captain, his bushy face shaking jelly-like with terror.

"What don't I understand?" demanded Kirke.

"Why it is that God has cursed me and let this happen."

The skipper leaned back in his chair and gripped its arms tightly. Then staring at the wall in front of him, he spoke on:

"The night before she sailed from up there—just before you came aboard—a man came to me—an escaped criminal I took him to be—and offered me a hundred pounds to carry him down the river and not let it be known he was aboard. I refused. He doubled the sum and then doubled that. When he offered me five hundred, I said 'Yes,' God help me. I'm a God-fearing man, Mr. Kirke, but when I thought of the kiddies at home and what that five hundred would do for them, I fell."

"Faugh! You canting hypocrite!" exclaimed Kirke. "Where is the man now?"

The captain was too shaken to resent the insult. He replied to the question:

"He's gone, too. He was in that room next to yours all the time. This morning as soon as I learned Miss Stevens had disappeared, I looked for him. He was gone."

"What sort of a man was he?"

"A native of some kind—an educated man—spoke English, but none too honest-looking."

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Kirke thought for a minute and then suddenly the whole significance of the man's presence on the ship struck him.

"Of course that explains the murders of Santos and Olivierez," he said.

The captain shook his head wearily.

"No, Mr. Kirke, it doesn't," he answered, his voice growing emphatic for the moment. "I swear by all that's holy I would not have kept on hiding him if I hadn't been certain that it wasn't him."

"How were you certain?" asked Kirke, unbelieving.

"Because—" the captain's eyes met Kirke's squarely—"at the time when Santos must have been stabbed—when the ship struck and for five minutes before, I was with the man in his room."

"And Olivierez?" demanded Kirke.

"A minute after I heard of what had happened to Olivierez I went to the fellow's room. He was lying in bed reading. You recollect how it was raining. Well there wasn't a rag of wet clothing in the room, nor a damp mark about the place anywhere. He couldn't have been out in that rain and got in again so quickly without some sign of it showing."

Kirke shook his head dubiously.

"That sounds reasonable enough. Just the same, I can't help thinking he must have had a hand in it. Still, that's not so important now. It's Miss Stevens we must find out about. And it looks as if he had something to do with her disappearance. Let's go look in his room."

IN THE cabin the only traces of the stranger were two tattered French novels and dozens of cigarette stumps on the floor.

"Did he have any baggage?" Kirke asked the captain.

"One hand bag," the captain answered. "He's taken it with him apparently."

"Showing there was nothing accidental about his departure. Now we'll look at the boats."

The two boats were floating alongside the ship, secured by their painters to the bottom of the steps which had been lowered over the side. As far as the captain could tell they were exactly as they had been left the evening before. The two mates came down the steps, got into the boats and looked over them carefully for any evidence of their having been used since they had finished their work the day before. They found nothing.

Just as Kirke was going to give it up and ascend the ladder again, one of the sailors standing just behind him exclaimed: "Three half hitches!"

"What's that?" queried Kirke.

"The painter of the second mate's boat there, sir," the man answered. "I made it fast myself. Look, two half hitches, same's any one does—no need to use more. But there's three in now."

The captain at Kirke's instigation summoned every man on the ship and asked each one if he had put the extra half hitch on the line. Not one of them had touched it.

"So much is settled then," said Kirke. "Provided they're all telling the truth, it shows our mysterious friend used the boat. Now there's another thing to look into." He told the captain what Miss Stevens had told him about seeing one of the boats leave the ship during the night, and insisted that the crew be told that there would be no punishment for the midnight wanderer if only he would confess. Captain Wiggars acquiesced. Though his own brain was seemingly paralyzed by the calamity he was willing enough to follow Kirke's guidance.

First the question was put to the men in a body, and then one by one the whole ship's company was interrogated. But no one admitted to having left the ship, either the night in question or at any other time.

"Which proves one of two things," Kirke said when he and the captain were alone again. "Either it was your unknown passenger or else some one on the ship who is in with him and so won't own up."

"Or else," the captain added, "that it's one of the men who went off on a lark who's afraid he'll be thought to have a hand in this business."

"Hang it all, you're right," assented Kirke with disgust. "So it proves nothing."

Kirke examined the hammock in which the girl had slept and made one discovery. The blanket which she had carried up from the room had gone. In the room itself he found nothing that gave him any light. Her clothes lay on the bunk, evidently just as she had left them when she undressed for the night. Her toilet articles and all the little odds and ends scattered about the room gave no evidence of any preparation for departure.

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Timmins and Flanagan were questioned separately. Each one denied vigorously both that he had slept a single wink while he had been on watch and that he had heard a sound. Kirke did not inform the captain of Timmins's remark concerning his ability to sleep with one eye open, but after the examination in the skipper's cabin he got the man by himself.

"Now see here, Timmins," he said, "between you and me I want the truth. You tell it to me and I'll see that no harm comes to you. But I've got to know, if we're going to save the young lady. Did you or did you not go to sleep last night?"

"S'elp me, Gawd, I didn't, Mr. Kirke," the man protested.

"Not for a single minute? Think now."

"Not for a second, sir."

Kirke was in doubt. The man seemed honest enough; he must realize that he had nothing to fear from being truthful to him; and yet—he resolved to push the matter no further at present.

"Are you and Flanagan good friends?" he asked suddenly.

"Oh, yes, sir," was the answer. "That is, in a way of speakin'—that is, sir, I mean Flanagan's all right, sir. 'E 'ad nothing to do with it."

The man's manner was defensive, and Kirke guessed that it was his class loyalty which spoke rather than any active friendship for the other quartermaster.

"Well, Timmins," said Kirke, "Miss Stevens couldn't have been carried away without any sound at all, and either you or Flanagan must have heard it. Remember that."

Timmins shifted his feet on the deck.

"Yes, sir," he mumbled. "All right, sir. Is that all, sir?"

"That's all now," Kirke answered crisply. "But remember I'm counting on you for help in this."

Kirke went back to the captain. The skipper had begun to recover his energy, but he was still willing to let the passenger dictate to him. And Kirke had made up his mind that the one practical thing to do was to search the shore.

If the captain's concealed passenger had gone off with Miss Stevens and then managed to get the boat back to the ship, he could not have gone far. So Kirke buoyed himself up with the hope that twenty men from the ship would soon be able to search the vicinity so thoroughly that she must be found. The thought that anything worse than discomfort could have happened to her he resolutely kept out of his head.

VIII

WHERE the *Cranston* was lying the river was over a mile wide and the ship was much nearer to the right bank than the other. It was therefore resolved to search this shore first. As soon as the crew had had breakfast, the two boats put off, the captain and the second mate going together, and Kirke accompanying Judd, the first mate.

The plan outlined by Kirke, and to which the captain agreed, was that they should separate when they reached the bank, one boat going up stream and the other down. Each boat was to send three men inland on every trail or opening in the jungle that it encountered.

Kirke's boat cruised down-stream, keeping within a few feet of the jungle-covered bank, while all hands watched for the slightest break in the impenetrable wall of tangled vegetation. For a long time they could detect not the smallest opening. Finally, at the end of a mile, they came on the mouth of what appeared to be a game-trail. The bo's'n and two men were sent in with orders to turn back at the end of four hours if they found nothing; to wait and send back a man with word if they did, and above all to keep their compass bearings and not lose themselves.

Half a mile farther another trail opened on the river, and here the mate and two men disembarked and plunged into the jungle. Kirke followed the bank for another mile and at last discovered a third opening, though the boat had drifted by without his seeing it, and he only suspected its existence when he heard a slight rustle in the bushes, and turning about, saw a deer coming down to the water's edge to drink. He wondered how many other trails he had passed.

Kirke and two men started in, leaving the last two men with the boat to wait for his return.

At five o'clock in the afternoon they got back to the river. Their clothes were torn in shreds by the thorns, their hands and faces were swollen and smarting with the bites of innumerable insects, they were

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utterly tired out, and Kirke was profoundly discouraged.

By the most strenuous efforts they had not made more than two miles' distance along the game-trail—for it proved to be no more than that, and at no place had they been able to tell what was hidden in the jungle ten feet on either side of the trail. For all they had seen of the country they might as well have been crawling through a tunnel. Nor had they come on a sign of life other than hoof-marks of deer and tapirs and wild pig.

They clambered wearily into the boat and started back to pick up the other parties, Kirke nursing a hope that they might have had better luck. Judd and his men reached the shore just as the boat came along.

They reported the same experience that Kirke had had. The bo's'n's party were sitting on a log smoking their pipes, looking rather bored but not at all fatigued. Their trail had come to a dead end a quarter of a mile in, they reported. There was nothing for them to do but come back, which they had done. They had been waiting there since noon.

When the boat reached the ship the captain and his party were already there. They had gone five miles up-stream, Captain Wiggars said, and had found only a single trail. This they had followed without finding anything until it was time to come back.

"All right," said Kirke doggedly. "We'll try the other shore tomorrow."

Tired out as he was, he had trouble sleeping that night. Though he told himself that the only sensible thing to do was to keep a cool head, conserve his strength and energy and go about the matter systematically and thoroughly, all such self-counsel was useless.

And as he lay awake in his hammock, inactive for the first time since he had learned of Miss Stevens's disappearance, he began to realize what it meant to him personally.

He discovered that what he had thought was horror at such a thing happening to any girl was rather the overwhelming shock of its happening to Jane Stevens. If he only knew what had happened; if only he had something to go on! He felt that the mystery of it and his own helplessness would drive him mad.

NEXT day the hunt on the other shore was a repetition of their experience of the day before. They discovered a half-dozen game-trails and explored them all without finding the least sign that a human being had ever passed over them.

That night Kirke decided to go back to the village they passed the night before Jane's disappearance. To be sure, the man could not have taken her there in the ship's boat and then returned it the same night. Neither did it seem probable that if he had kidnaped her he would have taken her to a place where she could see any one to complain to. Yet he had evidently gone ashore at the village. He might have secured some one to follow the ship in a boat, and perhaps he had transferred to that other boat and gone back to the village or continued down-stream. At any rate, thought Kirke, it was worth while going to the village to hunt for some trace of him.

When he had made up his mind, he talked it over with the captain and the mates, who declared that they remembered the channel well enough to steam back without any soundings and that the trip would only take half a day.

They got away at daybreak and reached San Isodoro, as the place was called, by noon. Kirke and the captain went ashore and immediately they encountered, as Kirke had foreseen, the exasperating dilatory inefficiency of Latin-American petty officialdom.

The place, it appeared, boasted an *alcalde*, a chief of police, and a justice of the peace, all yellow-skinned little men of varying degrees of pompousness and wordy ineffectiveness. Nothing could be done until the three had gathered in the municipal palace, as they called the dirt-floored center of municipal activity, and had surrounded themselves with various secretaries and assistants to the extent of a large fraction of San Isodoro's male population.

The captain's statement of the mysterious disappearance of his female passenger was carefully taken down in high-sounding Portuguese, sealed and signed by him and all the civic dignitaries. Then they began to discuss.

The first proposition advanced was to put a guard on the ship, "a strong guard, sufficient for any emergency. Not less than

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ten men," the chief of police averred solemnly.

Kirke, from his knowledge of the country, saw in that nothing more than a scheme to make the *Cranston* feed ten hungry San Isodoreans, so he countered by referring to an imaginary death from smallpox on board the ship three days before. The matter of the guard was allowed to drop.

The dignitaries continued to discuss. Into the plethora of words which bubbled from their lips Kirke managed to interject a few questions. Had any stranger been seen in this village four nights ago? Had any one left the village, taking a boat with him? Had any stranger come into their village at any time since the disappearance? Had any foreign woman been heard of in the village or in the country near by?

To each of these questions, slipped in as opportunity offered, the answer was a vigorous and united negative. Not thus should the honor of their fair community be impugned! San Isodoro had nothing to do with any such crime. But of course the authorities of San Isodoro would investigate the matter thoroughly.

The investigation, to be sure, would be attended by certain expenses, purely formal of course, but the *senhores* understood that the laws prescribed certain fees, and both they and the powerful company owning the *Cranston*—doubtless a very rich company—would wish the matter most carefully looked into. And so on endlessly until Kirke kicked the captain under the table and whispered to him that they were wasting their time. They placated the authorities with three English sovereigns and left, saying that they would confer again later.

Under the guise of making purchases they went into the half-dozen shops and in each one inquired for news of any stranger who had been in the village. But nowhere did they get any information.

"It's useless," said Kirke. "They wouldn't tell us if they did know. No, there's just one way to get anything out of these people, captain."

"And what is that?"

"Offer 'em money. We'll frame up a notice offering a good, fair reward for information leading to Miss Stevens's discovery. And we'll make it big enough to induce any confederate to sell out. Now I'll put up the same amount you do. What's your figure?"

Money was a serious subject with Captain Wiggars, and the parting with it a tragedy. He tugged at his beard and thought hard.

"They look to be a cheap lot," he said finally. "I should judge a hundred pound would make any of 'em tell what he knows. Call it that. I'll put up my fifty." He sighed heavily.

"You're wrong, captain," said Kirke. "You missed a cipher. You're going to put up five hundred—the five hundred that fellow gave you for his passage. And if you don't——"

Kirke refrained from saying what might happen, but as soon as they were aboard the ship he wrote out a notice offering one thousand pounds' reward. Captain Wiggars, though he perspired from every pore and gasped for breath, did not protest when the document was read to him.

Half an hour later the notice was posted on the front wall of the municipal palace, and within ten minutes read by the whole literate population of San Isodoro, and by them repeated to the others.

Instantly the air was alive with rumors. The *senhora Americana* was here; she was there; dozens of people had seen her; scores more had heard of her. Kirke established his headquarters in the alcalde's office and sifted the reports as they came to him. Most of them were merely laughable, but a few deserved investigation.

One man had the effrontery to lead him to a house where he declared the girl was confined and then to demand half of the reward before he permitted Kirke to see her. When this was refused he called through the window shutter to some one within to prove her identity by speaking to Kirke in English. Whereupon a thick-lipped African voice called in Jamaica negro dialect:

"I'se here, sah. Dat mon he speak de trufe, sah."

All the next day Kirke spent in San Isodoro, but at nightfall he had learned nothing. The only grain of comfort to assuage the bitterness of failure was the conviction that he had learned nothing because no one there could tell him anything.

A thousand pounds would have bought the whole village, from the alcalde to the blind beggar who basked in front of the little adobe church. Yet the offer of it had not elicited a scrap of helpful information.

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"There's no use staying here any longer," he said to the captain that night. There was a little gleam in the other's eyes. "No, your five hundred pounds isn't safe yet," snapped Kirke. "But for the present we'd better go back and search those river banks some more."

IX

ALL of this time Kirke had been carefully watching both Timmins and Flanagan. Though they both declared that they had neither slept nor heard a sound that night, he felt that one of them was lying.

From surface appearances he was more inclined to distrust Flanagan. Also the Irishman had been on watch from midnight until four in the morning, the most likely hours for carrying away the girl. Yet Kirke could get no scrap of evidence to justify his suspicion. He reasoned that the man who had played the part of confederate must have been liberally paid, and that the money must be somewhere on his person or belongings. So he had the entire crew searched, and the captain and the mates went through their quarters with meticulous thoroughness. But not a man was found to have any unreasonable amount of money.

The morning after, Kirke decided it was useless to stay longer at San Isodoro and the *Cranston* dropped down the river to its former anchorage. She made the run in a little over two hours. so they decided to comb over both banks the same day. Kirke accompanied the second mate in the boat which went to the left-hand bank.

All day long they skirted the edge of the jungle, hunting for openings which they might have overlooked before. A few of these they found, only to discover that they were blind trails ending a few yards from the water's edge.

As the sun was setting, the boat was drifting slowly down-stream a few feet from the bank and almost opposite the ship, which lay nearly a mile out in the broad river. The jungle here was very thick and had grown so far out in the water that from the boat it was impossible to see the line of the bank.

Kirke, sitting in the bow, turned around and was about to call to Andrews in the stern that it was time to go back, when he was caught by the expression on the face of Timmins. The man was staring straight ahead with a certain tenseness in the lines about his eyes and mouth. Then he threw a quick, furtive look at the dark water which lay under the thick foliage a few feet to the side of the boat. When he looked back his eyes met Kirke's. A sudden flush spread over his face, and gradually dying away left it very pale.

There flashed into Kirke's mind a suspicion which made him cold and faint. What had made the man flinch when he had been surprised while looking into that dark, overgrown pool? Suddenly he realized how slender was the hope with which he had been sustaining himself all these days. Why should he expect to find her alive?

Kirke reached out and caught a projecting branch as it brushed by. He held it fast, and the boat's stern slowly swung inshore with the slight impetus it had had. Then, while Kirke still held to the bough, the stern gently floated out and swung about until it stood straight outstream.

The mate gave a sharp exclamation.

"Hello, there!" he said. "There's a current flowing out from here."

"What does it?" asked Kirke quickly.

"Must be the mouth of some little stream that's hidden by all this growth," answered Andrews.

"Come on!" shouted Kirke. "In we go."

For five minutes they pushed the boat through dense vegetation and then broke out into open water. They were in the mouth of a small creek, very narrow, but, as far as they could tell, navigable for such a boat as theirs. Oars were shipped and they started to pull up it.

"If the light would only hold," Kirke said to himself. To Andrews he called: "We'll keep on until it gets too dark to see. We can't lose our way getting out."

"Aye, aye, sir," responded Andrews cheerfully. "This may be the place."

In the darkness which already hung over the narrow, jungle-walled waterway Kirke could not see more of Timmins's face than its bare outline.

For ten minutes they rowed on in silence. Then somewhere in the gloom ahead a dog barked. Kirke was both transported with hope and paralyzed with fear lest that hope be baseless.

"Hurry!" he jerked out harshly. "Hit 'er up!" He sat on the bow thwart,

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crouched forward, his whole being projected into the dark shadows which his eager eyes could not penetrate.

The boat rounded a point, and there showed against the black curtain of the forest a spot of flickering light.

"Hurry up!" gasped Kirke.

As they drew near they made out the outline of a rouch shack set up on poles at the water's edge.

"Hurry up!" repeated Kirke, not knowing that he spoke.

"Steady. Way enough," cautioned the mate.

As the boat slid quietly up to the shack Kirke sprang up on the little platform that ran across the front of the primitive dwelling. Sitting over a brazier was a very old, wrinkled brown woman. She looked up at Kirke with as great terror in her withered, ape-like face as if he were a fiend suddenly risen from the depths of the dark stream.

"Is there any one else here?" he demanded in Portuguese.

For answer she shrank against the wall, chattering incoherently and covering as much of her half-naked body as she could with the rags she wore.

Kirke left her and pushed inside the shack. It was too dark to see, so he struck a match and by its light discovered that the house was but a single room, bare and apparently unoccupied. Another match, and he saw in one corner a heap of rags—on the top of them a white blanket. The match went out and he ran to the corner and dropped on his knees beside the patch of white. He put out his hand and it touched a woman's hair. For an instant fear held him rigid. Was she dead? Then he heard quick breathing and his hand touched hot flesh.

"Is it you, Miss Stevens?" he gasped.

He struck another match and saw her face, flushed, haggard, framed in great billows of brown hair. Her eyes were shut, but presently she opened them, and as she looked straight at him it was as if something had suddenly clutched his heart and stopped its beating.

"Brute," she muttered, "take me back—kill me—you'll never——"

Her eyes fluttered shut and her voice trailed off into little strangling sobs.

They carried her out and laid her in the bottom of the boat. The mate suggested making a more thorough search about the shack to see if they could find any one besides the old woman.

"Search!" Kirke retorted. "What do we care who's here or isn't here? The only thing that matters is to get her back to the ship where we can take care of her."

It seemed to Kirke that the journey down the creek was interminable. He sat beside the girl and bathed her burning head, ever urging the men to hurry. At last they were out in the river and headed for the *Cranston*, distinguishable now only by its lights. When he reached the steamer's side Kirke took her in his arms and slowly went up the gangway.

As he stepped on the deck he heard a sharp exclamation behind him and turned about to see what it meant. A man who had been crouching in the shadow of the rail rose and held a revolver pointed at him.

"One sound—I shoot," he whispered in broken English.

He held the pistol so that its bullet would hit the girl Kirke held in his arms. Behind him Kirke saw other men crouching. Silently the young man nodded his head to show that he understood. Then he whispered in English and repeated it in Portuguese:

"I'll give you no trouble. Let me take the lady in the saloon."

Another man stood up and came toward him.

"All right," he whispered, "go on, quick."

Kirke turned, and with the fellow's hand on his shoulder carried his burden into the saloon. In the light Kirke turned to face him and saw that he was a tall, coarse-faced man with a streak of white scar down one side of his face from eye to chin.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"It is a young lady who is very ill. I am going to put her to bed."

"All right," was the response.

With the man at his heels, Kirke carried the girl to her own room and put her on her bed. He heard the sound of a scuffle on the deck outside and then a single shot.

While he was trying to arrange her comfortably the man stopped him.

"Come on. I'm busy."

"What do you want to do with me?"

"Lock you up, naturally. You're a prisoner."

"But aren't you going to let me take care of her? She may die if I don't."

The man made a gesture of impatience.

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"No. I can't leave you loose. She'll be all right."

X

KIRKE cut gashes in his clenched hands with his finger-nails in his effort to hold himself from jumping at the man's throat.

"Steady, steady," he called frantically to himself. "She depends on you. You've got to keep cool."

His captor looked at him with a malicious sneer.

"I can lock you up in here with her," he said. "That suit you?"

"That will do," mumbled Kirke, afraid to trust himself to look at the man. "Let me get into the medicine-chest first, will you?"

"Where is it?"

"Under the saloon sideboard." As he spoke, Kirke started out of the door.

"Get back there!" snarled the man. "I'll bring it to you."

A few seconds later the medicine-chest was slammed on the floor of the cabin and the door swung to and locked.

"Now remember," called the man from the outside, "there'll always be some one out here in the saloon with orders to shoot at the first head he sees sticking out of a door."

Kirke threw open the chest and hunted for the quinin.

When he had finished the task of inducing the unconscious girl to swallow a capsule he heard a tapping on the partition between the room they were in and the one which adjoined it. Then a voice saying, "Mr. Kirke."

"Hello, there," Kirke answered. "What's happened, Judd?"

From the passageway outside a gruff voice called in Portuguese for them to be silent. Then presently the man whom Kirke had seen spoke in English.

"If you talk to each other there," he said, "or communicate in any way, I'll throw you all out of it and put you down in the hold in irons."

Directly after this Kirke heard steps outside and the opening and shutting of the door to the next room. What it meant he could not tell.

He turned back to Jane Stevens. Her fever was still raging. With a thermometer, which he found in the medicine-chest, he took her temperature, and when he read the figures forgot about everything else.

He administered more quinin and then hammered on the door, and when the guard shouted at him, pleaded with the man for ice, offering him all the money he had in his pockets. There was a whispered colloquy outside and presently the door was unlocked and a basin with a small chunk of ice handed in. He cracked it up, put it in an ice-bag and applied it to the girl's head.

An hour later her temperature had fallen a full degree, though it was still dangerously high. He hunted through all of her bags and trunks and found more money, and induced the guard to bring him a larger piece of ice, paying him almost weight for weight in silver.

He kept the ice-pack constantly on her head. He bathed her body in cold water with hands as reverent as those of a nun pressing a crucifix to her lips.

Sometime during the night he felt a breeze coming in through the open port-hole and realized that the ship was moving. He gave the matter little heed.

Toward morning the girl's temperature had fallen to nearly normal. Her breathing gradually changed from the quick, racking gasps which had almost torn her body and soul apart, to the easy respiration of natural sleep. He took the ice-bag from her head and lay down on the couch across the room.

When he awoke it was broad daylight. Slowly returning to the consciousness of his surroundings he looked across the room and saw Jane watching him, a puzzled expression in her clear eyes.

"I have been very ill, haven't I?" she said presently.

"Yes," he answered, "but you are all right now."

"And you found me and brought me back, didn't you?" Her voice was weak and tired.

"Yes," he replied. "It's all right. Don't worry."

Her eyes dropped shut.

"Yes, I know, and the ship is moving, isn't it? We are going away from this awful place."

"Yes," he said. "And you are going to sleep, please, so you can get strong again."

"All right," she murmured. "I will. I'm awfully tired."

A flicker of a smile played across her lips,

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and while it lingered in the corners of her mouth she dropped asleep.

A man whom Kirke took to be a Brazilian negro came to the door and handed in food: bacon, beans and coffee, also a pitcher of water. Jane slept on, and Kirke ate it all, knowing that she would be unable to touch such fare. But he discovered in the medicine-chest a dozen tins of invalid broths and rejoiced. He spent the morning watching the green bank slip past the port-hole and trying to guess what had happened.

The steamer was going steadily downstream at full speed. Clearly she had a pilot aboard. But where was she going and who had taken her? What connection did it have with the deaths of Olivierez and Santos and with the mysterious passenger and the kidnaping of Jane Stevens?

ABOUT noon Kirke thought of the one easy and obvious way to talk to Judd and whoever else was shut up in the next room. He began tapping softly on the partition near its center and gradually rapped along it until he had reached the side of the vessel. Then he stuck his head out of the open port-hole. A few seconds later Judd's head appeared projecting from the port-hole of the other room.

Each of the two men threw the same question at the other: "What has happened?"

"Go ahead," said Kirke. "What do you know?"

"Not much," was the answer. "When we got back to the ship last night there was this gang of bloody pirates on board. They nailed us as we came over the side and we never had a chance. They shoved the crew down in the hold. The captain got a crack on the head and I think they put him in his own bunk. Andrews is in here with me. You found Miss Stevens, he says. How is she doing?"

"Better," answered Kirke. "Who do you suppose these men are and what's their game?"

Judd shook his head. "It's beyond me. It looks like piracy, only I don't see how they can expect to get away with it!"

"How did they get here?"

"Andrews says he heard a gasoline launch clearing just before we started last night."

"Who's running her engines? Is it Mac?"

"I don't know," was the answer. "I don't know anything that I didn't see between the top o' the gangway and this room, and that wasn't much. I——"

His head suddenly disappeared, and Kirke, drawing back as well, heard some one at the door of Judd's room. Listening with his ear to the partition he found that it was no more than the arrival of food, and a minute later his own door was opened and two plates of salt beef and beans handed in.

The noise awoke the girl. She looked at him silently for a minute and then said—

"It is very good of you to stay here and look after me."

"Of course I would do it," he replied.

"Have you been here all the time?" she asked.

"Yes," he admitted.

"But you must not," she insisted. "That is too much. I won't be able to rest at all if I know that you are cooped in here all the time."

He smiled cheerfully.

"But you can't be left alone just yet," he replied. She started to protest, but he cut her off. "And now you are going to eat something."

He opened a tin of broth and gave it to her in a glass. When she had swallowed the half of it she lay back.

"That's enough," she said. "Now you go on deck and I'll go to sleep."

"Won't you go to sleep first, please?" he said gently.

"Oh, well, if you must be so tyrannical," she answered. "But do promise not to wait here."

He nodded an affirmative.

She closed her eyes and seemed to drop asleep. After a few minutes she whispered—

"You haven't gone yet."

"No," he replied.

"Please do."

"In a few minutes."

She grew petulant.

"No, now, or I can't go to sleep. You've been so nice; don't spoil it by being contrary."

For a moment Kirke hung anxiously poised over the dilemma of a fretful quarrel and telling her what she was not strong enough to bear. He reflected that the choice of the first might not ward off the second.

He said:

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"There is a reason why I can't go now. Will you listen to it, please, and try not to be worried?"

"Of course," she replied. "You seem horribly serious, so you'd better tell me and get it over with."

He told her, making as light as he could of the situation, saying things were sure to come right before long, and that meanwhile it was no worse than temporary discomfort.

At first she was slow to understand what he was saying. Then when she realized, she lay back and was silent for a minute. Finally she said:

"I don't seem to be able to think very well, but I suppose the thing to do is not to lose one's head and to keep up courage."

Her fingers played with the edge of the sheet and her lips trembled a little then she smiled bravely.

"Yes," he answered, "that is the thing. We must keep our heads and you must get back your strength. Do you think," he asked after a pause, "that you could tell me how you were taken away? It might help to connect things up."

"I can't tell you much," she answered, "because I don't know. I have a recollection of struggling in my hammock and breathing chloroform. Then I woke up in the shack with no one about but an old woman. I couldn't leave because there was no path through the jungle and no boat.

"I stayed there two days half insane with fear, and yet feeling sure that you—that some one would come. Then I got fever. I don't remember much after that. You carried me out and put me in a boat. I seem to remember that—nothing more. You see it's not much of any help that I can tell you. I——"

Her breath was coming quickly from the effort of the long speech, and a spot of color burned in each of her pale cheeks. He interrupted her.

"You can help me most by resting for a while," he said. "If you'll try to sleep now I'll try to make my brains evolve some plan for helping us out. By tomorrow morning you may feel strong enough to aid us, also. Now go to sleep."

Because she was still very weak she consented, and promptly dropped asleep. With only a few short waking intervals she slept all the afternoon and night.

XI

JUNGLE fever is a serious enough affair while it lasts, but with a vigorous person recovery is astonishingly rapid. Jane woke up in the morning perhaps not quite fit to run a marathon race, but practically restored to health.

When she opened her eyes Kirke was busy cutting into the partition between the cabins with his penknife.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Good morning. I didn't know you were awake," he answered. "I'm cutting a doorway here. I can carve out a piece a couple of feet square, and fix it so it can be taken out or put in. Then we'll hang some clothes over it so it won't be noticed."

"But it might be," she said.

"Yes," he admitted.

"And it would be sure to make trouble."

"Oh, I don't think they'll find it."

"Why do you do it?" she demanded.

He hesitated.

"You see," he answered, "I thought it would be more pleasant for you to have some privacy."

She looked at him a little astonished, and with more than a little gratitude in her eyes, but she said:

"You are very considerate, but not very comprehending. Surely you do not think I am so silly as to wish you to do it."

"No," he stammered. "I— I— only thought——"

"Well, don't do it, please," she said. "It isn't worth the risk."

"Very well," he assented, putting his penknife in his pocket. "It was perhaps quixotic. I only felt that I must do it because——"

He came to a stop.

"Because why?" she prompted.

"Because—" Kirke began, and then stopped aghast as he came face to face with the real reason—a reason which, under their present circumstances, he must keep buried. For how could he tell her now that his overwhelming desire to take her in his arms and tell her that he loved her had brought with it a feeling that it was sacrilege for him to remain thus in that room with her?

"Because—" he stammered again. "Oh, I don't know exactly."

She laughed gently.

"Well, we won't worry about it," she said.

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Kirke was afraid to look at her.

All that day the *Cranston* steamed steadily down-stream; Judd said that it should reach the Amazon some time that night. Manaos lay sixty miles up the Amazon, above the confluence of the two rivers. The ocean was another three days down. Where were they going?

The four prisoners were united in the belief that the ship had been seized for her valuable cargo, but what the pirates meant to do with it, they could not guess. In Para and Manaos, the only two rubber markets on the river, it was a sheer impossibility to dispose of rubber to which the seller could not prove his title. To take a stolen ship to any foreign port and sell two million dollars' worth of rubber was equally impossible. But yet what other explanation was there?

And if the robbers did try to sell the cargo it was not reasonable to believe they would do so while its owner and the ship's crew remained aboard. Though they said nothing to the girl, the three men did not feel that their captors would stick at ridding themselves of the damning witnesses in whatever way might be most convenient. They resolved on making an attempt to recapture the ship.

Kirke and Judd, their heads out of their respective port-holes, discussed in whispers, seeking to discover some practicable plan. None could be found, until Kirke, craning his head far out, jammed his shoulder in the opening.

"Man! Another inch and ye could squeeze out," whispered Judd. "And from the port a man could climb up to the deck above."

"Yes," answered Kirke, "but where's the other inch?"

"If you could get off the port-hole casing it'd give ye two more. Have ye a screw-driver?"

"I can make one," answered Kirke.

He sprang back into the room, took a nail-file from the wash-stand and broke off its point. With this he found he was able to turn the screws which fastened the brass casing of the port to the ship's side.

He loosened them until he could turn them with his fingers, and then, tying the file to a piece of thread, swung it over to Judd at his port-hole. Judd and Andrews then fixed their own casing so that it could be taken out in a few minutes.

Squeezing half-way out of the port-hole and then sitting in the opening with one's legs still inside, it would be possible to reach to the deck above, and so draw oneself up on it. The men agreed that there was no use doing anything until late at night. Then all three of them would crawl out and make their way to the bridge, overpower any one who was there, and then try to liberate the crew before the pirates realized what had happened. How many antagonists they would have to deal with they could not guess; that they were taking a long chance they did know; still the advantage of surprise would be theirs.

Before finally deciding, Kirke told the plan to Jane Stevens, and said he thought it might easily fail, yet that they would be no worse off if it did.

"I don't quite see that," she said. "If you do fail it will be because—because something happens to you."

"Yes," he replied. "But it may happen in any case—and unless we do something and succeed, we shall be powerless to protect you—if—if it comes to trouble."

She thought for a while and answered—

"The protection of me is no more important than anything else; but if you think it best to do this, tell me how I can help."

"By doing the hardest thing of all—by sitting still and waiting."

IT WAS one o'clock when they judged that the best time had come. The casings were removed; Kirke strapped to his waist a revolver which Jane Stevens took from her trunk; then there was a brief argument as to who should go first. Judd was for having himself and Kirke climb out at the same time, and Andrews follow.

Kirke insisted that there was less chance of making a noise if they went one at a time, and then, too, the first one out would be able to help the others up; also he stipulated that he should go first, as he had their only revolver. To this the other men finally agreed.

The state-room was dark. Kirke stepped to the center of the room where he knew Jane was standing.

"It won't take long," he whispered.

"I know," she breathed tremulously. Her hand found his. "Good luck!" she said. "I can't—I can't seem to say any more—but you know, don't you?"

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He raised her hand close to his lips.

"May I, please?" he asked.

"May you!" He could feel her tremble. "Ah—yes."

Her words had not died away before he held her fast in his arms.

"Goodby," she murmured. "And good luck!"

"It can't fail now," he answered exultingly.

With his face toward the stars he slowly squeezed through the port-hole, bending his body up as it emerged. Soon he had hold of the edge of the deck above him. Then drawing himself farther out he relaxed the grip of one hand, reached it farther up and seized the meshing which ran up from the deck to the rail.

With the uppermost hand he drew himself still farther up until he grasped the mesh with both hands while his feet rested on the bottom of the port-hole. He steadied himself for an instant before he drew himself up to the top of the rail.

Suddenly a light flashed in his face, a Portuguese curse rang in his ears, and some one with the strength of a gorilla seized his forearms, wrenched his fingers loose, and flung him backward.

As he struck the water he heard shouting and running about on the deck and the bridge, and when he came up he saw a streak of flame dart out of the black bulk of the ship and heard in the same instant the report of the shot and the splash of the bullet. Five times more the man shot at him, and then yelled down at the water that if he had not been hit he would surely drown.

XII

KIRKE had not been hit, but that he would drown seemed likely enough. The river was miles wide, and he had no idea which was the nearer bank, the current was swift and full of whirlpools and treacherous eddies; there were alligators a-plenty.

Still he swam. In the darkness he could not tell whether he was making toward the bank or not. Had he stopped to reason about his situation he would have known that his chance of getting out was infinitesimal, but he was not one meekly to give in merely because there were long odds against him.

He did not know how long he swam. The sound of the *Cranston's* engines had ceased long ago. Then he heard them again, and thought at first that it must be some freak of the wind.

But presently he distinguished a different note. It was not the *Cranston*. He stopped swimming and shot his body out of the water. Far down the river was a single white light, and on each side and below it a red and a green light. Kirke swam toward the approaching steamer, and when it had come close he threw every atom of his strength into a shout for help. The people on the steamer heard him, stopped, put out a canoe, and picked him up.

It was a small river steamer, with no one but Brazilians aboard. When Kirke told them his experiences and tried to persuade them to turn back after the *Cranston* they merely thought him demented by his adventure. He offered them fabulous sums of money, they asked him to produce them, and when he turned out his empty, water-soaked pockets they laughed at him.

Shortly after sunrise next morning Kirke was landed in Manaos. He went straight to see the American Consul. That functionary had not yet arrived at his office, and when he did come, an hour later, the waiting-room was filled with others, who apparently had prior claims on the Consul's attention. Kirke waited with growing impatience.

The talk of those about him was all of the spectacular performances which, it appeared, were taking place in the local rubber market. There had been tremendous selling and violent fluctuations in price, without any notable increase or decrease in the visible supply of rubber. No one knew what it meant, but every one was agog with excitement.

Meanwhile Kirke grew irritable and hungry. On the ship that morning he had been given a cup of coffee. He could not get a meal until he had seen the Consul, because he had no money.

About noon he was ushered into the inner office. The Consul, a large, pink-faced, complacent man, cast him an appraising look which made Kirke, for the first time, conscious of his tatterdemalion appearance.

However, he sat down, told the Consul who he was, and, to account for his present predicament and his need for help both for himself and those aboard the *Cranston*, he began the recital of his adventures from the

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time the ship had sailed with its precious cargo.

Half an hour later he was out in the street cherishing a wild desire to shoot the Consul. The man had flatly refused to believe a word of his story, and had taken him for a broken-down adventurer with an ingenious tale.

There were too many of Kirke's sort came into Manaos, he had said, for any such story to fool him. He had even refused to advance the money for Kirke to cable home for credentials. He had, however, given him five milreis to buy himself a meal, and recommended that he get a job as 'longshoreman until he could earn enough money to pay his passage out.

Kirke went to the Governor of the province, the Mayor of the city, the chief of police, and three American business men. Everywhere it was the same. He looked like a beach-comber, and his story completed the impression. In a place like Manaos, no one took chances.

LATE in the afternoon he realized that he was almost fainting for want of food. He went into a squalid-looking little bar and restaurant, and sitting down in the back room ordered a plate of beans and rice.

As he ate, he saw a man whom he judged to be the proprietor of the place knock at a door on one side of the eating-room, and then enter the room on which it opened. Presently he came out again, shutting the door behind him. But almost immediately it was opened part way, and a voice called after the proprietor. Kirke saw a man's head through the crack.

He jumped up, rushed to the door, and forced his way into the room before the man inside had time to stop him.

"Olivierez," he shouted, "how did you get here?"

When Kirke burst in on him, Olivierez reached for the knife in the back of his belt.

"Hold on!" panted Kirke. "There's no need of that."

The pilot, his hand still on the knife, stood back eying Kirke threateningly.

"Where's the *Cranston?*" he demanded.

"Wait," he commanded, as he heard the landlord at the door. He walked to it, whispered a few words through the crack and then locked the door on the inside.

"Where is she?" he repeated.

"Gone down the river," answered Kirke. "I thought you were dead."

"Gone down the river!" exclaimed the pilot. "Where? When? Tell me quick."

Kirke had realized the instant he saw Olivierez that the man could establish his identity for him, so now he quickly told him of the state of affairs on board the steamer, and how they had come about. During his recital the pilot showed extreme anger and amazement, but no incredulity.

"Yes," he said. "I knew that man was aboard and that he might do such a thing. He's the man—the mysterious passenger, I mean—who has seized the ship."

"Now, what I want you to do," said Kirke, "is to come with me to the Consul and the local authorities and prove I'm who I say I am, and am telling the truth. Then we'll get them to send a gunboat or something after her."

"I can't do it," declared Olivierez flatly.

"Can't do it! Don't you want to help get that ship away from those men?"

Olivierez sprang up so suddenly that his chair went crashing to the floor.

"Want to!" he flung out. "I've got to! But not through the authorities." He paced quickly to and fro for a few moments. "Look here, Mr. Kirke," he resumed. "I don't want to appear in this—I won't do it through the Government, I mean. But I'll have to go at recapturing that ship myself. And what I do will be twice as promptly done as anything the Government would do. Do you want to go in with me?"

"Yes," answered Kirke. "But why can't you appear?"

"That, Mr. Kirke, is none of your business."

Olivierez went to the door and called to the landlord. When he came he was sent off on an errand whose exact import Kirke could not gather.

"We will wait here a few minutes," said Olivierez.

The man appeared to be unwilling to talk either of his motives or his intended actions, so Kirke reverted to the subject of the pilot's supposed drowning. On that, too, he refused to be questioned.

"I am here alive," he said curtly. "Let that be sufficient."

There was a short silence which Olivierez broke by saying—

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"The incomprehensible thing is what they mean to do with the ship and her rubber."

"That is what I couldn't see either," responded Kirke. "They can't sell it, can they?"

The pilot made no answer, and there was another silence. Kirke's eyes traveled carelessly over the headlines of a newspaper lying on the table. The news was mostly of the war. Kirke was amused by the reflection that he had almost forgotten that a world war was in progress.

Suddenly he started.

"I have it!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Olivierez dryly. "Have what?"

"Who would buy a shipload of rubber just now and ask no questions? What country has its imports cut off and must need rubber the worst way? And here is a report of some of her cruisers off the Brazilian coast. Why shouldn't they take that rubber, load it aboard one of them and try to run it into one of their home ports?"

"You're right," answered the pilot slowly. "And that country has plenty of agents ashore here and in Para who would negotiate the deal and arrange the details. We'll have to catch the *Cranston* before she gets outside the three-mile limit."

The landlord came to the door, with him three other men, villainous-looking fellows, all of them. Olivierez let them in and requested Kirke to wait outside. Presently they left; other men came and went; Olivierez called Kirke back to the inner room, and they left the place by a side entrance.

They followed dark and deserted side streets until they reached the water-front, and five minutes after seeing the gleam of the lights on the water, Kirke was one of a company of twenty scurrilous-looking cutthroats, commanded by Olivierez, and embarked on a racing motor-launch which was slipping down the river at full speed.

"We have a third more speed than the *Cranston*," Olivierez explained. "She has about twenty hours' start, but because of our shallow draft we can follow a less winding course. We ought to reach her just before she makes the open sea. Can you talk German?"

"Yes," replied Kirke.

"That helps. We'll hail her in German, and if our guess is right, she'll let us come alongside."

XIII

DURING the two long days which the launch raced down the river there was plenty of time for Kirke to discuss with Olivierez the happenings on board the *Cranston*. As to the circumstances of his own leaving the ship and what he was doing in Manaos, the pilot would speak no word. On the subject of the disappearance of Miss Stevens and the capture of the ship he was more communicative.

"That he seems to have left the ship and rowed ashore the night you lay off San Isodoro is easily explained," Olivierez said. "There's another village fifty miles below, and the two are as alike as two peas. He probably wanted to see where he was, so he could locate the creek where he hid her. Naturally he didn't go ashore and no one saw him."

"Do you know the creek?" asked Kirke.

"Yes, I've heard of it," answered Olivierez. "Only a few men on the river can find it. There's more than one criminal been hidden in there."

"But how did he leave Miss Stevens there, return the boat to the ship, and then get away himself?"

"Oh, that's easy. He sent the boat back by the sailor he took with him. Then he found a canoe at the shack up the creek and took it to reach the first village where he could get a motor-boat. With that he must have cruised down the river until he picked up his men. If he had plenty of money he could easily find men to help him do anything he chose on that river."

"And his object in kidnaping Miss Stevens—what do you make of that?"

"Probably to give him time to get together his gang. He would have known that the *Cranston* would stay in that vicinity either until she was found or every one was certain that a search was useless. He couldn't have struck on a more certain way of keeping the ship from going on to Manaos."

"If he had taken the ship before we found Miss Stevens, do you think he would have gone to that place and brought her back himself?"

"Oh, I don't know. Probably not."

Kirke shuddered.

"What do you suppose he'll do with her and the crew if we don't catch the *Cranston?*" he asked.

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"Who knows?" answered Olivierez. "Whatever is most convenient, I dare say."

XIV

SUNSET of the second day and they were in the estuary of the Amazon. Seaward, where the gray-blue sky met the flat yellow surface of the water, floated a tiny wisp of black.

"Smoke," said Olivierez, putting a pair of field-glasses to his eyes. "She's hull down," he announced. "One funnel, four masts. That's the *Cranston's* rig."

Before the darkness which rose from the eastern horizon had spread over the sky and the water beneath it, they made out the double white band on the funnel, which proved the distant vessel to be the one they sought.

By nine o'clock they were within two miles of her. They reduced speed and held her at that distance for four hours more. Olivierez served out revolvers and ammunition to all hands on the launch—knives they already had.

At one o'clock they came alongside the *Cranston*, and Kirke hailed her in German. When the answer came in Portuguese he called out in the same language that he had orders for her and wished to come aboard.

A minute later he was climbing the rope ladder she had lowered. At his heels was Olivierez, and behind him the rest of the men. When they gained the deck Kirke and the pilot waited for a moment, exchanging a few words with the man who had lowered the ladder.

The next two men over the rail jumped on him and overpowered him, and Kirke and Olivierez ran for the bridge. Three more men followed them, and the rest as they gained the deck ran for the fo'c's'le to block the egress of the sleeping pirates.

In the gloom which shrouded the bridge, Kirke saw two figures—a helmsman and another standing close by. The man at the wheel turned at the sound of his footsteps.

"Get off the bridge! Go below where ye belong, ye scutt," he said in English.

Kirke brought the heavy barrel of his revolver down on the man's head, and Timmins fell senseless. The other man sprang forward and Kirke saw the gleam of a knife-blade. He shot and the man threw up his hands, spun half around, and crumpled up.

The flash of the revolver blinded Kirke and for an instant he stood still. Then a broad splash of light was projected through the darkness as the chart-house door was flung open. Kirke, whirling about, saw that Olivierez was just behind, between him and the door, and that the tall man with the scarred face was charging toward them with a long knife in his hand. He thrust his revolver over Olivierez's shoulder and fired.

Olivierez, too, fired at the same instant. The charging man seemed to trip, and then fell heavily forward against Olivierez's shoulder. The pilot staggered and then stepped back.

"He's done for," he said. "Run down to the fo'c's'le and the engine-room and see that they bag the rest of them."

From the five men surprised in the fo'c's'le and the six others in the engine-room and stokehole there was no resistance. In five minutes they were disarmed and tied up. Then Kirke went to the saloon. He unlocked the door of Jane Stevens's room and called:

"Will you come out, please? It is quite safe."

And when she came out, very pale and beautiful—looking like a fairy vision there in the half light, she said—

"Nothing in the world matters, now that I know that you are safe."

They released the mates and the captain and sent them off to find the crew and turn them loose.

Kirke and Jane went out to the hatch with them, and just as they stepped on the deck two men came by, carrying the body of the scarred-faced man. Kirke was not quick enough to keep her from seeing it.

"Gurri!" she exclaimed. "It is the man who was up in the rubber country with us," she said to Kirke. "The one I told you we suspected of welshing."

"He did welsh, it seems," replied Kirke. "But he won't any more."

One of Olivierez's men came and said that the pilot wanted to see Kirke. Kirke and Jane went up to the bridge. In the chart-room Olivierez lay on the couch, his face the color of ashes.

"What's the matter? What happened?" asked Kirke quickly.

"He got me," answered the pilot in a tired voice. "When he fell he got his knife in—see."

He pulled aside the blanket which lay

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over him, so that they could see the hilt of a knife standing out from his shoulder.

"But it's not so bad," protested Kirke. "We can get a doctor at Para and fix you all right."

"No," was the answer. "I'm going in a few minutes." His eyes closed and then opened slowly. "But first I must speak—" There was a long pause, and then he began again very quietly. "I lost—I played for a fortune and lost—it's no matter—except——"

He stopped again.

"Yes," prompted Kirke.

"I deserted the ship—there up the river—when I knew she could not come on without me—came to Manaos——"

His words were coming only with a supreme effort.

"Yes, you came to Manaos—why?"

"To sell—to sell rubber. Every day I sold."

"Yes," said Kirke, thinking the man must be wandering. "What rubber did you sell?"

"None," answered the dying man. "I sold—what you say?—I sold short. The *Cranston*—no one knows she comes—then she brings two thousand tons—rubber falls—I make a fortune—but the *Cranston* does not come—I lose."

His eyes dropped shut and his voice became a mumble of Portuguese words of which Kirke could distinguish only here and there words concerning the *Cranston* and her cargo—where was it and why did it not arrive, so that he might make his fortune? He lapsed into silence.

Then very suddenly his eyes opened wide and stared over Kirke's shoulder with an expression of overwhelming terror.

"Santos! No! No!"

Exhausted he fell back and began again to mutter in Portuguese:

"A fortune—it meant a fortune. Take him away—take him away. I saw him buried—I saw him dead. I—Mother of Christ help me—I killed him. Ah-h——"

A long throaty rattle, and he died.

Kirke covered his face. Then he put his arm about the girl and led her out into the cool, clean night air.

"Come," he said. "Do you see that horizon yonder? Below it lies the North Star. Before long now you and I together shall see it rise out of the sea, and it will mean that all of this is behind us."

"But soon," she whispered, "or the horror of all this——"

"Yes, soon," he replied. "A fortnight now at the most. But be patient, for it means not only what lies behind us, but that ahead of us waits the greatest happiness that any man and woman can know."

ALASKA

by **EDWARD L. CARSON**

HARSH and mysterious to some I seem
While others term me most benificent:
For treasures which make fact appear a dream
Within my bounds for ages have been pent.
Not of the mine alone, whose yellow wealth
Of small account, scarce worth the talking seems,
To him who grasps the glorious hoard of health
Abounding mid my mountains and my streams.

Grand is the game you play while Time endures,
Life you inhale with each ecstatic breath;
Winning, the palaces of Earth are yours—
Losing, the awful penalty is death.
I can be conquered; I may be subdued,
But it was written when the world began
None but the strong upon me dare intrude,
I yield my tribute only to a Man.

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THE WHITE THING TO DO

A SANDY BOURKE STORY By J. Allan Dunn

Author of "The Island of the Dead," "The Greenstone Mask," etc.

SANDY BOURKE surveyed the dice with an air of whimsical disgust.

"You ornery pair of flubdubs," he apostrophized, "you were shore carved from the laig of a lame jackass. An' me totin' you 'roun' faithful an' believin' in you for ten years or mo'. An' now you turn up a pair of sour-faced deuces against a throw like thet!"

He flicked the unfaithful bones into a corner with a flirt of his hand and picked up his opponent's dice, which lay with two sixes topmost, in a grin of derision.

"Now, *there*," he said affably, "is what I call a handsome pair of dice. No deception about 'em; transparent so you can see they ain't no tricks about 'em; an' ready to do the right thing when called upon. They shore hev smiled sixes at you this afternoon."

He weighed the celluloid cubes in his palm and then held them casually to the light between a fondling thumb and finger.

"Pretty color, ain't they?" he said. "Sort of golden, like their winnin's."

He rolled them across the table to their owner, a short, swarthy man, inclined to stoutness, a little prominent of nose, with eyes a little too close together, a trifle oblique, inclined to be shifty amid their setting of wrinkles and puffiness—eyes that watched Sandy furtively as he handled the dice, but showed no answer to the smile that held his thin-lipped mouth awry.

"Luck's been with me this trip," he said in a deep, grating voice. "Can't keep up forever. Are you through?"

Sandy Bourke, lean and long and limber, hair that matched his first name equally as it did his grit, serene and gray of eye, rose leisurely.

"Cleaned out," he said cheerfully. "Nothin' left but a little common sense an' some credit. I hev' to be gettin' back to the ranch, Misteh——"

"Sprague."

"Misteh Sprague; but some time you an' me'll hev' another li'l session. I come down to Rubio from the Curly O right often while we're shippin'. So-long."

Sprague slipped his dice into his pocket, a light coming into his dark eyes as the cowboy left the room.

"I reckon that's all he had with him," he muttered. "Eighty-five bucks! It helps for expenses. And he'll come again. He's got the gambling eye. As long as he makes money some one else'll spend it."

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Sandy Bourke paused at the bar on his way out.

"Who-all's the gent in the back room I've been shakin' with, Bob?" he asked. "I never met up with him before."

Bob stopped wiping a glass and looked at him quizzically.

"Trim you?" he asked.

"Kindeh clipped my financial ambitions," admitted Sandy. "I *did* hev' some idea of orderin' a new saddle when I come in town. He said his name was Sprague. Has he got any reg'lar business?"

"You bet he has," answered the bartender. "It was none of my affair to butt in, Sandy, beforehand, an' I don't say he's crooked at that, mind ye, but——"

"But what?" asked Sandy.

The bartender set down the polished glass and strolled to the front door of the saloon with the cowboy.

"That chap, Sprague," he said confidentially, as they took and tilted two chairs under the awning, "is a cross between a coyote an' a hawg, an' I'm not fair to the hawg, at that. He come here about ten year ago an' started in hawss-raising up Sweet Creek cañon. He brought a Denmark Coach stud an' a string of brood mares an' sold teams to the settlers.

"Man comes out an' buys one of these garden-patch irrigated farms on the 'stalment plan, prepared to make a fortune growin' grapes, or peaches, or 'Gyptian cotton, some crop he don't know sour beans about, as a gen'ral rule, an' Sprague meets him, smilin' like the advance-agent of Prosperity an' Plenty. Does he want a team? He does, but he ain't got much cash. Reckons he'll rub along with one cheap plug for a while. Foolish, says Sprague, lookin' benevolent as Santy Claus. Thet ain't no way to make money. And it ain't—for Sprague.

"The upshot is the settler signs a paper an' goes off with the team, an' Sprague, who can't lose anyway, goes home with the morgidge an' what cash he c'ud pry loose. Ef the feller happens to fall sick, or his crops is shy, or prices are down, if ennything slips up different from what he hoped an' the land-agent promised him—Gawd help him. Sprague won't.

"He owns half the small ranchers in Jeff Davis an' El Paso counties, an' a heap over in New Mexico along the Pecos River, body an' soul. He's plain mongrel from top to toe, an' they's just one noise he listens to—cash money."

"An' spare times he shakes dice for small change," commented Sandy. "An' he's shore lucky."

Bob laughed.

"Thet's what all the boys say. He cleaned out Mormon Peters an' Sodywater Sam last time you boys was in from the ranch."

"He did, did he? An' the tight-lipped sons-of-guns never peeped. I thought they were kindeh glum ridin' back. Looks as if the Curly O shore had to git even."

"Did you notice his dice, Sandy?" asked Bob, glancing back into the still empty saloon. "They can't be loaded, they're transparent. But, to hear the boys talk, you'd think all six sides was six-spotted."

"I noticed 'em," replied Sandy briefly. "How d'ye like the mare, Bob?"

He whistled, and a mare, her bright bay coat shining with the luster of burnished metal, round-barreled, deep-chested, flawless of dainty limb and clean-carven of head and nostril, whinnied and stepped daintily across the road from where she had been standing rein-free under the shade of some trees.

Bob surveyed her critically.

"Thet's some hawss, Sandy," he said with a wise shake of his head. "But where's Pete?"

"The ol' pie-eater stuck his foot in a doghole. He's invalided. This is number two on my string, an' she's shore some prancin' mile-swallower. Not a speck of white outside her hide an' not a speck of yelluh under it. Hev' ye, Goldie, ol' lady? So-long, Bob."

HE SMACKED the mare on the flanks, in return for which she whirled playfully as, one hand in the mane and one on the roping horn, Sandy swung into the saddle and loped lightly down the street.

Outside the saddler's he stopped, dropped the reins over the mare's head and went into the store with spurs jingling, a lithe, live, workmanlike figure, straight-backed and straight-legged, humming as he entered.

The saddlemaker came to meet him.

"I bin tracin' out thet cactus pattern for the saddle, Mister Bourke," he said, "but I ain't quite finished."

"An' I ain't quite ready yet," answered

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Sandy. "Hed to put my money in anotheh place for a li'l while. Let me look oveh your asso'ted dice, will ye?"

"Goin' to start a crap tournament?" asked Hank, as Sandy went over the selection carefully.

"I'm lookin' fo' a partickler shade," answered Sandy. "You've got all the rainbow here, shore. This is nigh what I wanted, but the color's too dark. I want somethin' honey-color, sorteh light amber. You know a chap called Sprague?"

The saddler nodded.

"Well, he's got a pair thet's all-fi'ed lucky an' I want to match 'em."

"I've seen 'em," said Hank. "He didn't get 'em off me, but I can get some the same. They're a stock color."

He looked up at Sandy, a dozen of the colored cubes in his palm, and grinned.

"You been stung?" he asked.

Sandy grinned in return.

"M-mh," he said. "You too?"

"No, but I've seen sev'ral thet has."

Sandy took the saddler by the sleeve of his shirt and led him unresisting toward the back of the store.

"Let's you an' me go out here where it's quiet," he said, sitting on a bench and gently forcing the saddler to take place beside him.

"Now this is low down an' confidential, Hank," he went on, placing a hand on the other's knee. "You an' me are pretty good friends, I take it. An' you know I'm straight?"

"Sure!"

"Wal, I'm goin' to be crooked as a saddle-tree, an' I need your help. This Sprague, now—he any partickler friend of yours?"

"I do business with him. I wouldn't want him as a pardner."

"'Nough said. He's about as straight as a dawg's hind laig. Now then, Hank, do you know ennything about shapes?"

"Meanin' females?"

"I ain't foolin', Hank. The shapes I mean is a gambler's specialty, sorteh crap-player's companion. Once on a time they used to load dice, befo' they stahted in makin' these transparent celluloid ones. Now they *shape* 'em. They ain't quite true on the sides, not square on the face of 'em, *sabe?* When a feller's used to 'em he can tell by the drop an' the click in the box how they lay, an' if he's an expert at jugglin' the box as he shakes, he can slide out high numbers most any time he needs to win. It's an' old Missouri an' Arkansaw trick. I've seen it worked in Hot Springs. So's our friend Sprague, I wouldn't be surprised. I suspicioned the way he threw high at the right times this afternoon, together with the way he worked his wrist shakin' an' easin' 'em out, an' I got a good look at the dice. They was shapes all right."

"I wouldn't put it past him," declared Hank.

"This same Sprague seems to hev' more debtors than friends from what I hear. He set me back eighty-five real dollars thet ought to be in your till right now—set me back crooked, mind you. He's cleaned out my side-wheelers, Mormon an' Sodywater, an' the Curly O's out an' injured. No objection ef it was *straight*, you understand."

"Sure," assented Hank.

"You get me two pair of dice the same color as his, an', ef enny one *should* ask you, you only sold me *one*. I'm goin' to do a li'l shapin', an' a li'l polishin', an' a li'l practisin' spare times on the ranch. Misteh Sprague's willin' to giv' me my revenge an', by an' by, I'm aimin' to git it—includin' for Mormon an' Sodywater."

"I'll write to El Paso for 'em today," said Hank. "I attend to my business with Sprague, but I don't like his or the way he handles it. Between us two, Sandy, he's part snake an' part skunk."

"You an' Bob oveh to the Cactus don't exactly agree as to his pedigree," said Sandy, "but you've both got the same gen-'ral idea. I'll be in again Monday or Tuesday. So-long."

THE blacksmith at the Curly O had broken his wrist and Sandy, scouting for a substitute, was following up a lead given him by Hank Moffett, the saddler, that brought him, loping easily along on Goldie, amid the foot-hills of the main central plateau of Jeff Davis County, ten miles from Rubio.

The morning was young, the air crisp and cool. Sandy had ridden to town from the ranch overnight and had made an early start. Mare and rider, one animal in their well-knit unity of action, seemed as fresh as if they had just started. The sun had aroused the cicadas who commenced the perpetual tuning of their orchestra, a road-runner, gay in iridescent blue, jaunty of

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crest and sweeping tail, raced before them along the wagon road that led steadily upward. Early hawks, supperless overnight, were patrolling the air-lanes, volplaning at elusive quarries promising breakfast. A jack-rabbit scudded across the road, and the mare shied.

"Steady, ol' lady," said Sandy, balancing in perfect poise automatically, as a sailor rides the shifting angles of a deck.

"It's the sex, I suppose," he soliloquized.

When he was mounted on Pete, his first string horse, his chum of many miles and hours, he talked to him as befitted their mutual respect and understanding, but the mare was a new acquaintance, and Sandy communed with himself.

"Mares, like wimmin," he went on, "are natcherally skittish. 'Peahs like, to me, they're allus jumpin' sidewise at nothin'. You're a good li'l hawss, Goldie"—he patted the arching neck while the mare pricked her ears and snorted—"but somehow I git along betteh with a man-hawss an' a man-dawg, same as I do with humans. Bein' an orphan without sisters is what done it, I suppose, but I feel the same way about gels as you did 'bout thet jack. Here's where we turn off, li'l hawss."

They left the unfenced road to take a slanting trail up a slope, brown with grasses, set with blue-gray clumps of cactus.

Sandy touched his shirt pocket, where the dice he had got from Hank overnight reposed, one pair of which he intended manipulating for the undoing of the unconscious Mr. Sprague. He took out his bag of Durham and rolled a cigarette one-handed as he rode, smoking it thoughtfully to the end. Then sang aloud the tag of the song that had materialized from his reverie:

". . . . . I drink my whisky clear,
I'm a rollickin', rovin' son-of-a-gun of a roamin' gambolier."

They topped the rise and looked down into a little pocket-valley, velvet green amid the brown hills. A stream ran from a cluster of great alamo trees, the land was planted to crops, squared off by irrigation ditches in which the water was gleaming. An adobe house snuggled amid the trees. Smoke came from its chimney, chickens, tiny flecks of animate white, ran clustering about a woman who fed them from her upheld apron.

"Thet's shore a nice li'l fahm," commented Sandy. "I'm goin' to hev' one like thet some day. I reckon thet's the Widdeh Wilmot fattening the poultry. She shore keeps the place up."

But the evidences of careful farming weakened as he rode down into the valley. Fences were in disrepair, machines stood rusting here and there, despite the dry atmosphere. There were weeds in fields that stood in sore need of cultivation. The ditches needed clearing, and the little *rancheria* showed palpable signs of neglect.

By the alamo trees a youngster of about twelve was fishing a pool, curiously intent upon what his age usually esteems a pastime. He turned a serious pair of brown eyes beneath puckered brows toward Sandy, as if annoyed at the approach of horse and rider.

"We won't scare 'em, Bub," said Sandy. "Catchin' enny?"

"Got two," answered the boy laconically. "Breakfast. Supper too," he added, hauling in his line to rebait.

"Mus' be terribul fond of fish," muttered Sandy to himself. "Nothin' much but suckehs there, I reckon.

"This the Wilmot place?" he asked aloud.

The boy cast carefully beyond a sunken log.

"Yep," he answered. "Mum's up at the house." And he turned his back.

Sandy looked at him curiously.

"Queer kid," he thought, and rode on.

The Widow Wilmot, a pale, anxious woman of thirty-five or so, with eyes that showed signs of sleeplessness and worry, and more than a suspicion of recent tears, received him nervously, winding her arms in her apron.

"I come in from Rubio, m'm," said Sandy, taking off his Stetson, "to see you."

"'Bout the mortgage?" asked the woman, unwrapping her thin arms and plucking at her fingers.

"Lord, no!" assured Sandy. "I heard you-all had a man workin' here who was leavin'. Feller named Hansen. Heard he was somethin' of a smith, an' I want to hire him. My name's Sandy Bourke. Foreman of the Curly O."

"Oh!" said the woman, palpably relieved. "Won't you 'light?"

Sandy swung off the mare, which nosed at the loose grains on the ground, startling the chickens.

"Hansen's quittin' today," went on the

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woman. "He's in the lower meadow, but he'll be up to breakfast. You'll set down with us?"

"I had mine two hours ago, thanks," said Sandy, wondering what Hansen would do for breakfast if the fish failed to bite. Chickens are not often killed for meals on Western ranches. "I'll jest wait to talk with him, seein' you all are through with him."

"I had to let him go," said the woman. "I reckon he'll be glad to work for you. You see——"

Moisture gathered in her eyes, and Sandy hastened to roll a cigarette. The widow glanced at his frank face and continued, quietly wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"You see," she said, "I'm feared I'll hev to giv' up the ranch. My mortgage is due. Due today. They's three days' grace, they tell me, but I made sure you was come to see about it."

"Can't you meet it?" asked Sandy.

"No," she said. "It's no use. I've tried hard sence my man died, but I ain't bin able to manage things right. Ef it was jest housekeepin' now——"

She summoned a pitiful little smile, and Sandy answered it reassuringly.

"Thet's some boy you got," he said. "I bet he's helped right smaht."

"He's done fine," she said. "Ef I could git by this year—the crops are good—but the int'rest's mounted up and I've had no cash to hire much help. Hansen's done his best, but——"

The tears overflowed, and she buried her head in her apron, sobbing.

Sandy watched her with a feeling of helplessness. Then he put one arm gently across the thin, heaving shoulders.

"Don't you take on so," he said. "It ain't termorreh yet. Mebbe we can fix this up."

"You don't know Sprague," the woman said, still muffled in the apron.

A light came into Sandy's gray eyes that turned them to the color and glint of steel.

"Oh, it's Misteh Sprague, is it?" he said. "I know Misteh Sprague. I'm aimin' to see Misteh Sprague in the next day or two. You cheer up, mebbe I can do somethin' with him."

The widow looked up, and seemed to gather courage from the cowboy's resolute face.

"Oh, ef you only could," she said, clasping her hands. "But he's a hard one."

"Now don't you worry too much," said Sandy. "They ain't no sense in bein' feared of what's goin' to happen. It neveh does enny good, an' half the time they's nothin' to be afraid of. How much do you owe?"

"They was five hundred to start with for the team," she said. "Then I borrowed some ter—ter bury Jim's father. Now, with the int'rest, its nigh on to nine hundred. I ain't exactly sure. The figgers mix me up."

"Nine hundred," repeated Sandy, looking up the valley. "An' the li'l place is easy worth five thousan'. Bob was right, an' Hank too. He's coyote, hawg, snake an' skunk."

The widow looked at him anxiously.

"Thet ain't such a pile of money, m'm," went on Sandy encouragingly. "I've seen thet much in a heap mo' than once. An' the security's fine. I'd take it up myself if I could, but I ain't got no sense about keepin' money. I might get some one to look it oveh. But I've got a sneakin' idee I can persuade Misteh Sprague to let go. I've got an argyment I think may work out."

His left hand crept unconsciously to where the dice bulged in his shirt pocket.

"Did Sprague say when he was comin' out?" he asked.

"He told Hansen he'd be out Friday, on'y I was feared——"

"You stop worryin'," said Sandy, rising to his feet. "Today's Tuesday. I'll see Misteh Sprague. We'll fix somethin'."

"Oh, thank you, a thousand times," she said. "An'—an'—God bless you."

"Thet's all right," said Sandy hastily. "I'll do my best. Thet Hansen comin'?"

Five minutes later he rode away, head erect, his lean jaw set.

"I'll hev' to git busy with them 'shapes' tonight," he said, "an' practise. Tomorreh's pay-day. I'll git Mormon an' Sam to kick in an' help stake me."

The mare shied again as the boy, his face young and sunny, a broad smile revealing a broken tooth, raced into the trail from the willows bordering the stream.

"Got four big ones," he announced proudly, holding up the gleaming fish.

"Thet's fine, Bub," said Sandy. "You skip along an' tell yore mother luck's comin' yore way. So-long. Hol' on a min-u-et."

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He fished a dollar from the little pocket of his chaparajos and flipped it to the astonished boy, who deftly caught it and watched with shining eyes, as the mare, pricked lightly by her rider's spurs, broke into a gallop.

A ROW of horses, reins trailing from the bridles, stood drowsily in the shadow of the trees opposite the Cactus saloon. Three of them were from the Curly O ranch, one of them was Sandy Bourke's bay mare, Goldie. Near them stood a buckboard, a sleepy but well-pointed and powerful roan in the shafts, tied to a post-ring.

It was three o'clock on Friday afternoon, and the horses had been standing under the wide branches of the alamo trees since one. It was hot outside, yet by comparison with the stuffy, crowded back room of the Cactus, endurable.

There was usually a poker game going on in the afternoons between the town habitués and casual callers from the near-by ranches. In the evenings, a crap game and a faro table, now shrouded with white cloths, helped to make the proprietor of the Cactus pay his license with equanimity.

But this afternoon the play had been abandoned to two men who sat at opposites about a little table covered with green baize, alternately throwing amber-colored, celluloid dice from a mutual leather cylinder. Around them stood silently a score of men, shifting occasionally on uneasy feet, wiping away the perspiration that gathered constantly on their foreheads.

The room was blue with smoke, the atmosphere heavy and stale, but no one left his place, watching with eager eyes the spots on the dice as they rolled and settled into place, giving little, subdued grunts as a main was lost or won, talking in quiet whispers in the occasional intervals of play, when Bob came in with a tray full of glasses, all holding the same liquor—rye whisky—save for the inevitable and untouched chaser that accompanied each drink. By unwritten regulation the rounds were paid for by the players, as their luck varied.

The word had gone out that the foreman from the Curly O was bucking "Sprague's Luck," and that the stakes were high. Most of the onlookers had contributed at one time or another to the horsedealer's bank-roll, and while there was a feeling that every time the cowman won, it was *their* money he was collecting, the general sympathies lay with Sandy Bourke.

The stakes were determined by a main of three throws, the best two out of three, taking each throw, with its maximum possibility of twelve, separately. The bets had started at five dollars a main but had risen to fifty.

Sandy Bourke, an unlighted cigar between his lips—cigareets, he declared, were too messy for cards or dice—lifted a little pile of gold and deposited it as a paperweight on two yellow-backed bills just handed reluctantly to him by Sprague.

The heat seemed to have little effect upon Sandy. He sat straight and lithe in his chair, quietly handling bills and coin, looking with keen gray eyes directly into the darker ones of his opponent, over which had filmed a dull glaze of surprise, bordering on apprehension.

"I allus 'lowed it was the *color* of them dice of your'n thet made them lucky," he said. "Thet's what I told Hank when I asked him to git me a pair like 'em. Didn't I, Hank?"

"Sure," answered the saddler, who stood rigid, his jaws working perpetually at a wad of tobacco that bulged in his cheek.

Sprague sat with his hands clutching nervously at the edge of the table. His swarthy face was putty-colored. Little streams of sweat trickled from his temples down his plump jowls and dripped into his lap. His nostrils were dilated, the corners of his mouth twitched as he gazed at his dice, which revealed his last throw of four—a trey and an ace—against Sandy's of a six and a deuce.

"You-all was winnin' fine at the staht, till we traded dice," said Sandy easily. "Bob, set 'em up all 'round, will you, with sar'sp'rilla fo' me."

He turned to his opponent again.

"An' you won the last main but one," he said, picking up his dice and rattling them in the box.

"Want to change back the dice?" he asked.

Sprague looked at him evilly, as if he were being baited. Then licked his lips furtively with his tongue, while the film in his eyes cleared to a subtle gleam.

"You've won five hundred off me," he said. "Change the dice an' make it double or quits, an' we'll call it off. I've got to go.

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I've got a business deal on this afternoon that's got to be attended to."

Sandy changed the box to his left hand and removed his cigar, looking at the chewed end critically. Then he dropped the cigar to the floor, resting his right hand on his knee under cover of the table.

"Give me a fresh cigar, Bob," he ordered.

"I don't usually do thet, Misteh Sprague," he went on. "It's po' jedgment. You see, ef I lose, you'll still be ahead of me from the otheh day."

Sprague picked up the drink that had been set beside him and gulped at the whisky, spilling a little as he lifted it to his lips.

"Of course, if you're afraid?" he sneered.

Sandy looked at him evenly.

"You don't know me right well," he said, "or you-all wouldn't say thet. But I've got a hunch thet I'll win. I'll go you."

He tossed the dice left-handed to the center of the table, where they rolled to join the others.

"Choose enny two you like," he said. "Feel 'em, weigh 'em, use your best jedgment. Then shoot."

Sprague looked at him menacingly, suspiciously. Sandy's eyes met the challenge, and the glance of the horse-dealer faltered.

Sprague took up the dice and slowly rolled them between his fingers. A puzzled look came over his face.

Some one laughed, but he still handled them deliberately, finally setting one to one side.

"Take your time," said Sandy. "I'm ridin' my hunch."

Sprague slowly made his second choice, the puzzled look still on his face, and dropped the dice into the box. He shook the cylinder with an even, level movement of his arm from wrist and elbow, held high above the table, close to his side-turned head.

"Time!" said some one ironically. It was Hank Moffet.

Sprague scowled and deftly slid out the dice. His face cleared. He had thrown eleven.

"Some high," said Sandy, handling the box in turn and tossing out the cubes. "A six and a one."

The crowd shuffled uneasily.

"Still riding that hunch?" sneered Sprague.

"Sure," answered Sandy. "An' not pullin' leather neither."

He took up the box for his second throw and spilled the dice on the table with a swift withdrawal of his wrist.

"A six an' a fo'," he announced. "Thet's betteh. You-all don't *dare* to beat a hand like thet, Misteh Sprague."

Sprague grabbed the box.

"We'll see," he said venomously.

His elbow brushed a bystander, and he bared his upper teeth like an angry wolf. He glanced at Sandy as he did so and dropped his eyes once more before the cowboy's hard, level stare.

The cubes fell to a four and a three.

Sprague's mouth twitched.

"Even up," said Sandy. "Follow yore shake."

The horse-dealer, his lips apart, breathing unevenly and audibly, bent his head close to the cylinder as he shook it.

"Listenin' to the spots?" asked Sandy. "Sixes make the most noise."

Two or three laughed at the sally, and Sprague frowned as the dice slid to the table from his shaking hand, one tilting on its corners and finally falling to match the other—both fives!

Sandy reached quietly for the box, and raised it for the last throw of the main.

"Thet ain't such a bad throw, Misteh Sprague," he mocked. "It *shapes* well to win, but my hunch says these *shape* bettuh."

He set the box firmly down on the table, bottom up, covering his throw. Sprague, once more clutching at the table edge, glared at him.

"What d'ye mean?" he said.

Sandy looked at him, his jaw thrust forward.

"What would I mean?" he parried. "Mormon, lift it."

A stout cowboy who had stood behind Sandy's chair, breathing stertorously and mopping his bald head with a scarlet bandana at every throw, reached forward and lifted the leather cylinder.

A gasp broke from the onlookers.

Sandy had thrown the ultimate—two sixes.

"Some li'l hunch," said Sandy.

Sprague rose unsteadily, grasping at the back of his chair. His face was a mottled gray now, his hands shaking.

"I'll have to give you a check," he said, fumbling at a fountain-pen in his upper vest-pocket.

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"I'd ratheh hev' cash," said Sandy. "I've got a cash payment to make this aftehnoon."

"I'll cash it," said Bob. "Thet's all right, Mister Sprague."

The horse-dealer sat down again and filled in a check with trembling fingers, passing it to Sandy, who handed it to the bartender.

"Keep the dice as a souvenir, Misteh Sprague," said Sandy with dry emphasis.

Sprague, breathing heavily, picked up the dice and flung them on the floor, stamping on them. Then he broke through the crowd that surged with the winner to the bar, and crossing to his buckboard drove furiously away, slashing with his whip at the startled roan.

Sandy rang a double eagle on the bar.

"Set 'em up, Bob," he said. "I got to be goin'. Come on, Mormon; come on, Sam. Get a-movin'."

"WHERE in Sam Hill we goin', after you winnin' all thet money?" asked Sodawater Sam indignantly, as the three saddle chums rode out of town. "Ain't we goin' to spend it?"

"They's three thirty-three apiece, even split," said Sandy, "and a dollar for terbaccy. I'm goin' to buy a new saddle with some of mine when I git it back."

"Git it back? Ain't you got it?" demanded Mormon Peters. "You must be locoed. This ain't the way home. Say, where we goin'?"

"Short cut oveh the hills," announced Sandy blandly. "Do you-all need thet money *bad?* Ef I give you back yore stakes now—fifty apiece you put up—will you loan me the rest?"

"Shore thing will we. Why didn't you say you needed it?" said Sam. "What you goin' to do? Buy a ranch?"

"Goin' to lend it out on a mortgage—six per cent." said Sandy cheerfully.

And he told his chums the plight of the Widow Wilmot.

"Here's where we can make a short cut across the ridge," he announced, "so we can beat Sprague in plenty of time."

"Will we be goin' back to town afterwards, to spend thet extry century?" inquired Mormon as the three friends loped along, fired with their chivalric errand. "You better play the wheel with it, Sandy."

"We'll go back, but I ain't playin'," answered their foreman. "I figgeh I've kindeh fo'ced my luck."

"How's thet?" demanded Sam. "Didn't you beat him at his own game with the 'shapes'? What kind of a bluff did you make on thet last main? Thet beats me. S'pose he'd picked the phony ones?"

"He did," said Sandy. "Thet's what worried him. They were all four phony.

"Let me tell you-all somethin'," he went on. "It ain't allus the *hand* he holds, it's mighty apt to be the *man* who wins the game. I had him beat before he picked up the dice. Sprague knew he was crooked an' he knew that I knew it. Thet's what took the hobbles off his goat.

"You see, he traded dice with me once, on my call, 'cordin' to custom. He was ahead an' it didn't worry him none, becos' he figgered he'd an even break, an' he thought I knew nothin' about the shapes an' couldn't use 'em. Only I could. I got two pair of dice from Hank an' I used the straight ones first. Afteh a while he got suspicious at my winnin' steady, but he couldn't change back right away. I might hev' called him, an' the crowd knew I was playin' with *his* dice. Then, when I offered to trade back, he thought I was still a suckeh an' jumped at it.

"When I got my fresh cigar an' changed hands with the box, I palmed in my phony dice, so there was no difference between us ef it come to a showdown. When I told him to take his choice an' he found them all phony, it rattled him.

"You need good nerves to be a crook, whetheh it's cards or dice. An' you've got to be extry steady to handle 'shapes' right. Even then you can't only be dead sure of one six. An' he knew I was onto him. Thet counts a heap. I've seen a crook lay down a winnin' hand he'd faked up, becos he didn't hev' the nerve to play it. I was beatin' him at his own game, but I was doin' the square thing, becos there was thet li'l widdeh an' her 'God bless you' back of it.

"He got his high spots the first time, but he fell down the second throw. There was a chap once wrote a book called the 'Psychology of Poker.' It don't sound the way it's spelled, an' I ain't dead shore what it means, but I had him buffaloed with what this writeh chap calls 'mental domination!' "

"Soun's powerful," said Mormon.

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"It *is*," acknowledged Sandy. "It's a case of 'mental suggestion.' I suggested to him he was a crook, an' his nerve was bad, an' I told him right acrost the table he wasn't on the square. An' he jes' natcherally fell down."

He took two amber cubes from the pocket of his leather chaparajos and tossed them into the brush.

"There's the extry pair," he said, "the good ones."

"What was thet hunch you was talkin' about?" asked Mormon.

"Thet was pahtly bluff," said Sandy. "But mos'ly the fac' thet it was my *last* throw. You'll remembeh thet I threw some high the second time. Thet didn't help to steady him none."

"You might be some crook yoreself," laughed Sam.

"I might," answered Sandy. "But I'm afraid I'd lose *my* nerve."

THE cow-chum trio—The Three Musketeers of the Range, somebody once dubbed them—sat their horses on the brow of a hill, looking down upon a roan horse dragging a buckboard at overspeed along a dusty wagon road.

"There goes Sprague for his mortgage," said Mormon Peters. "He'll shore be hoppin' mad to git the cash instead."

"The ol' carcass-eatin' buzzard," put in Sodawater Sam.

Sandy laughed.

"What's the joke?" demanded Mormon.

"I was jest thinkin' ef a man owned Sprague he could staht a whole menagerie, 'cordin' to what folks call him," said Sandy. "Anyway, the widdeh's happy. Let's be movin' to town. I swalleh'd soft drinks all aftehnoon an' I'm pinin' fo' su'thin' thet tastes. What's eatin' you, Mormon? Got stummick trubble?"

The stout cowboy sat on his sturdy pony, the reins about the horn of his saddle, his hands clasped about what he vaguely remembered having once styled his waist, looking across the valley.

Sandy's question brought him back from his abstraction with a start.

"I was figgerin'," he said. "Seems to me, Sandy, you ain't doin' the white thing by yo'se'f, let alone Sodywater here—or me."

"What d'ye mean?" asked Sandy.

"Well. We've paid off the widder's mortgage. Thet's all fine an' dandy. But who gits the money? Thet pizen-faced hyena, Sprague! Whose money is it? Our'n! Didn't he skin us out of it first, an' didn't you git it back last?"

"We git it back from the widder, don't we?" demurred Sam.

Mormon surveyed him with a look of unqualified scorn.

"You long-horned flapjack!" he exclaimed. "Yore brains has all run to mustash. Ain't the boy got to be eddicated? Don't she need every red cent she kin git? What's the matter with him, Sandy?"

The crestfallen Sam muttered an apology.

"Thet's what's eatin' me," went on Mormon, "the thought of thet—thet—horn'-toad of a Sprague ridin' back to town with our money, what you won from him this afternoon, legitimet."

Sandy, lighting a cigarette, nodded.

"They's a heap of sense to what you say, Mormon," he said. "Et don't seem right. Did you fellers ever heah of a chap named Robin Hood?"

"There was a chap named Hood back in Illinois," said Sam tentatively. "He was a barber."

"This chap was a Britisher," said Sandy tolerantly. "He robbed the rich who robbed the poor an' giv' it back to the poor. He was a highwayman, but he was square. An' he was some fighter."

"He had the right idea," said Mormon. "Thet follows along my figgerin', don't it?"

Sandy blew a whiff of blue smoke into the still afternoon air.

"I'll think it oveh," he said. "You two jog along to town. I'll be with you pretty soon. Ordeh suppeh at the hotel."

His chums viewed him with consternation.

"What's eatin' *you?*" demanded Sam. "We-all hev' got to hurry, ennyways, to get to town before dark."

"I'll be there," said Sandy. "Wait foh me at the Cactus. We'll eat an' make the ranch by moonlight afteh the hawsses git rested up good."

Mormon chuckled.

"Goin' to sneak back to visit the widder?" he said, with an elbow dig at Sam.

Sandy looked at him.

"From a man who's suffe'd the misfortunes with wimmin' *you* hev', Mormon," he said, "I s'pose thet might be expected. You neveh could keep out of range. Now you two lope along. Thet's ordehs."

The pair reluctantly turned their horses.

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"Hol' on a min-u-et," said Sandy. "Len' me yore neckerchief, Sam."

"It's silk," protested his chum, taking it slowly off.

"I like the color betteh 'n mine. Here."

Sam reluctantly traded his blue silk neckwear for Sandy's red bandana and joined Mormon, already moving townward.

"I bet you were right about the widder after all," he said.

"We all fall for them sooner or later," said Mormon. "Keep a movin', I'm dry."

Alone on the hill, Sandy dismounted and sat thoughtfully a while, kicking his spurs into the white, clayey soil. The sun sank toward the western hills, already purpling to twilight, the cactus threw long shadows, and the night relief of insects chirped to pitch their key for the evening overture.

After another cigarette had burned to ash, he rose, threw the loop of the mare's reins into the crook of his elbow and started downward.

"I saw a spring down this away," he muttered. "Here it is. Stand still a min-u-et, Goldie. It's a shame to spoil yore beauty, li'l hawss, but it ain't goin' to be permanent."

MORMON PETERS and Soda-water Sam Manning were sitting on tilted chairs outside the Cactus when Sandy rode up in the deepening dusk.

"Thought you was never comin'," growled Mormon. "My ribs is growed to my backbone. I ordered a steak thet thick." He held his hands six inches apart. "It's waitin' for you to show up to go on the fire."

"Come on an' eat it then," said Sandy. "Here's yore handkerchief, Sam."

"You bin swimmin' a river?" asked Sam. "The mare's wet clear to the knees."

"I come home in a hurry," said Sandy. "Here's yore neckerchief, Sam."

A rapidly driven buckboard rattled by them and drew up outside the hotel to which the chums were bound. By the time they caught up with it the rig was surrounded by a rapidly growing mob of men, listening to the excited speech of Sprague.

"Held up, I tell you!" the horse-dealer reiterated. "Three miles out of town! Robbed of nine hundred dollars! I'd just collected it."

"On a mortgage?" asked some one from the crowd.

A laugh went up, stopped by the sheriff, who stepped from the sidewalk to the side of the buckboard.

"Held up, Sprague?" he snapped. "What kind of a man? Could you recognize him? I want a description."

"It was after sundown," said the flustered Sprague. "He had a dark handkerchief over his face. I didn't see him good. But I'd know the horse."

"Well, what was it like?"

"I could swear to the horse anywhere," said Sprague, his eyes traveling about the crowd, resting for a moment upon the three chums, avoiding Sandy's laughing gaze. "A bay, with a heavy white blaze down the forehead and four white stockings. I got a good look at it when he made me drive off. You can't fool me on the horse. That's my business."

"Any one recognize that description?" asked the sheriff.

The crowd was silent.

"Come on," said Sandy. "Let's eat."

Half-way through the big steak, served in a private room sacred to the Curly O upon demand, Mormon choked, and Sam slapped him vigorously between the shoulders. Sandy, from the other side of the table, regarded him frowningly.

"You should mind yore table etiket, Mormon," he said. "Yore too greedy."

Recovering, Mormon looked at his foreman with streaming eyes, gasping between chokes of mirth.

"You ol' son-of-a-gun," he gurgled. "A white blaze with four white stockings! An' the bay mare's laigs soakin' wet! An' Sam's blue silk neckerchief! You ol' son-of-a-gun! Where'd you get the white dope?"

Sandy looked at his chums with a twinkle in his gray eyes.

"Mormon giv' me the idee, when he said I wasn't doin' the white thing," he said. "You see they's an outcrop of white *dobe* where we was watchin' Sprague this aftehnoon, an', down a ways, a handy spring. The two mixed up fine as paint. Kindeh hard to get off the mare's fetlocks, but, as Mormon said, it was the white thing to do."

Sodawater Sam leaned across the table, unable to find better comment than Mormon's phrase.

"You ol' son-of-a-gun," he repeated softly, shaking his head. Then he had an inspiration. "You li'l ol' Texan Robin Hood!"

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Lost Treasures of the World

An Article II

by Stephen Allen Reynolds

Author of "The Man With the D. S. O.," "A Flier in Steel," etc.

IN THE preparation of this article on lost treasures the author has consulted hundreds of magazine and newspaper clippings, and scores of published volumes on the subject.

Many letters have been written addressed to persons at home and abroad—persons in a position to know the facts concerning specific treasures. In fact all available sources of information have been consulted in an effort to have the articles both up to date and authentic. Yet, owing to the very nature of the subject, neither the author, the editor nor the publisher can guarantee as authoritative these stories of hidden and sunken riches. On the other hand, simply because all responsibility is disclaimed, there is no reason to suppose that the accounts which follow are untrue. Naturally, were the treasures easily gotten at, they would all have been lifted long ago. The mere fact that a treasure has not been found is not conclusive proof that it does not exist.

At least a conscientious effort has been made to cover the entire field as thoroughly and reliably as possible, so that the result may stand in the future as a comprehensive reference on the entire subject of lost treasure.

To those of you who are less interested in the practical value of such a gathering of stray facts and half-forgotten traditions than in the romance inevitably attached to them, the following accounts will have strong story-value. In all the scope of adventure and romance there is, perhaps, no phrase more stimulative to the imagination than those two words "hidden treasure."

The ground can not be covered in two articles, and there will come next month the stories of still other lost hoards that may, perhaps, some day come back into the hands of those who seek.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

WARTIME HOARDS AND SUNDRY OTHER TREASURES

OWING to the nice discrimination shown in legal practise, it is probable that reports of finds will become fewer and fewer in proportion to the number of unearthed hiding-places of hidden treasure. The tendency is to keep secret the fact of finds in the United States, as it has long been in England. Finders do not particularly relish handing over thousands of dollars to people who never knew or dreamed of the treasure till it was unearthed by some one else.

This tendency of finders to "mind their own business" is indicated in the case of Joel Coryell, sexton of the Romulus, New York, cemetery. He was digging a grave in the lot of Thomas Mann, preparatory for a funeral. Some distance down he came upon an old-fashioned iron pot, with an iron cover. He took out the pot and carried it away. He did not disclose its contents; but it was supposed that it contained a large sum of money. The place where the pot was found had been farm land till within a few years, and was added to the cemetery rather recently. There was no tradition or folklore tale to account for the pot. Still, it was surmised that it might have contained the plunder of some Tories driven back by Sullivan's expedition in 1779, or perhaps the hoard of an early settler.

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One of the treasures of Revolutionary wartimes was the "engineer's pay-chest," stolen at Carleton, or Buck, Island, on the St. Lawrence River. This island was the fitting-out place of Tory raiders, as well as the site of the arsenal, fortifications, etc. A chest came to the chief of the engineers full of his corps' pay. When pay-day came the chest was gone, and the fact was reported to General Haldimand at Montreal. It had been stolen. From that time much energy was used in trying to solve the mystery of the disappearance.

About 1879, the late Colonel Horr of Cape Vincent was visited by a man who wanted to rent a skiff for several days. A deal was arranged, and the stranger rowed away in the direction of Carleton Island. The afternoon of the second day the stranger reappeared with an iron box, iron-strapped, in the stern of the boat. Lumps of clay were sticking to it. Colonel Horr was less curious than many another would have been. He rowed the stranger to the steamboat-wharf, helped lift out the heavy chest; and, receiving his pay, departed homeward. The chest was very heavy, and about a cubic foot in size.

A few days later, William Majo, who owned part of Carleton Island, sent his boy to a pine grove after horses. The boy returned frightened, with a story of a grave. Sure enough, there was a hole in the ground. At the side was a pile of new-tossed earth and a stone thirteen or fourteen inches square. In the bottom of the pit was the print of a square box.

There is no doubt that there are many hoards and chests of booty whose whereabouts might be discovered by means of maps which the hiders drew covering the places of concealment. The man who probably found the Carleton Island pay-chest probably had some sort of map or tradition to go by.

In the main, however, treasures are discovered by accident, in which case the finders have no claim whatever to the hoard until it is in their possession. If one knows of a treasure and goes out and gets it, having received a description of its location, he is much more secure in its possession than if he merely happened upon it. Foreknowledge indicates some kind of descent from the one who hid the treasure—indicates some measure of inheritance that could not fail to have its effect, for instance, in a suit for the division of the find among the treasure-seekers. The man who first knew where to dig must inevitably have the lion's share, his companions having partnership share at best, and, at worst, mere wage payment as laborers.

Several things contribute to the hidden treasures. War is, of course, the most emphatic compeller of hiding. Perhaps there is no strip of country in America where there is so much hidden treasure as along the route of Sherman's march to the sea.

The strip of country, nearly five hundred miles long and sixty miles wide, is dotted with caches of hidden gold, silver and other treasures. When the army had passed, many of those who hid the contents of the great mansions were dead or driven away. Many of the marks by which the treasure could be located were destroyed. Some of the gold coins so hidden would now have a value many times greater than at the time of the war. There were Confederate gold coins, now, perhaps, as rare as any gold coin known. A pot of Confederate gold would be a find indeed.

Of specific American buried treasures there are probably hundreds known to tradition. There is, for instance, the story of Walter Butler's loot.

Butler was the notorious Mohawk Valley Tory raider. In 1782, at the end of the Revolutionary War, he came to the Mohawk Valley with a small army of soldiers, Tories and Indians. His purpose seems to have been less to raid the valley than to dig up the gold, silver, treasures and valuables buried by the Tories at the beginning of the Revolution to keep them from falling into the hands of the patriots.

The raiders, under command of Major Ross, were driven off after they had dug up something at Johnson's Hall. They were pursued to the bank of West Canada, in Northern Herkimer County of today, and overtaken at the ford. The packers were so burdened that they dumped their pack-loads of silver, gold and jewels into deep little coves on the creek flats, while Walter Butler, commanding the rear guard, checked Colonel Marinus Willett's pursuit. The coves were then stirred up, to make them muddy. Butler was killed, and the raiders continued their flight. Some of the treasure was recovered by Tories after the Revolution; but only a little of it.

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A treasure is supposed to be in Nick o' Jack's cave on the Tennessee-Alabama line. This cave is one of the largest in the country. Colonel John Rusk of Haines Falls, New York, once traveled thirty miles through it, coming out on the other side of the river ridges. Somewhere in its gloom is said to be a river-pirate's hoard. Old Nick o' Jack himself was reputed to have been the leader of a band of renegades, half-breed Indians, and runaway slaves.

There was no opportunity to spend the gold they captured, and so it was hidden until the renegades could go to New Orleans. The gang was broken up by a little army of settlers, and the leaders killed. The leaders alone knew where the hoard was, and their secret died with them.

IF OLIVER CURTIS PERRY, the noted train-robber, were to speak, he might tell what became of his booty. A thorough desperado, he also was the exemplification of courtesy, his Central New York acquaintances say. Incidentally he laid away enough money to keep him in his old age. He said so many times, and this has led to the supposition that he has a hidden treasure somewhere in Central New York. If it is found, or if it has been found, it is doubtful whether the fact will ever be made public willingly by the finder. There would be too many claimants for it—victims.

So it is with many treasures, and yet there are many who at once make a public cry of joy when they discover pots of gold. One such was a semi-imbecile on the mountainside across the Tennessee from Lookout Mountain, below Chattanooga, who was water-boy for some roadmakers. One day at lunch he started up, walked to a fence, and began to dig. Two feet down he discovered a pot containing between three or four thousand dollars in coin, greatly to the amazement of his fellow workers.

A year ago or so Edward Woods and Thomas Dickinson, loggers, went hunting rabbits near Oil City, Pennsylvania. A rabbit was holed in a brush-heap, and the two men tried to poke it out. They poked out a kettle instead. There was thirty-six hundred dollars in gold and twenty-two dollars in silver in the kettle. The old-timers remembered that John Caldwell, an eccentric farmer who died in an insane asylum, had received ten thousand dollars for his farm in the oil excitement. Every one went out hunting for gold in that neighborhood, when the loggers' find was reported. Of course, the heirs of Caldwell had valid grounds of suit against such a discovery as that.

The fortune of the Spanish Masons is said to be hidden in a cliff in the Arkansas Ozarks. According to fable it rivals the wealth of the Montezumas. A Doctor Hill, of Reading, Arkansas, has driven tunnels in the spot indicated by many mystic Mason and Indian signs, which to interpret is as difficult as the code of Poe's "Gold Bug."

The loot of the two Spanish cathedrals, consisting of jewels and plate, and the workings of a score of mines are supposed to be hidden in a cave that was made the depository for hundreds of Masons and their families who left Spain in the seventeenth century because they were ruled by a pope who was bitter against Masonry.

Kansas and Oklahoma have stories of buried riches that rival the tales of the wealth of Captain Kidd. Some of the stories, it is asserted, have their origin in Aztec legends, while more of them are based on the alleged information given by dying Forty-niners, who, to save their wealth from pursuing Indians, hid it in the ground, hoping at some future time to return and recover it.

It is said, too, that train-robbers when hard pressed by their pursuers often buried their booty, expecting to return in time and divide it. For years the Dalton boys, the most famous of Kansas train-robbers, made points in the Indian Territory their rendezvous. These points are the center of one phase of the treasure-hunting industry.

Nothing has ever been found, however, and Emmet Dalton, the survivor of the gang, denies that anything was ever buried there. But the hopes of the searchers continue to soar while their spades go deep into the prairie.

The most sought-after treasure of Kansas is the so-called Indian gold which, it is said, was buried in 1856 by a party of freighters bound from the gold-mines of Mexico to the trading post at Fort Leavenworth. The treasure amounted to $70,000 in Spanish gold.

Before leaving New Mexico it was discovered that a small party of Indians was

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following the wagon train. One July night when the train was passing along the banks of the Arkansas River, through what is now Kearny County, it was seen that the Indians were preparing to attack. The wagons were immediately parked and a council of war was held.

The camp was midway between where the towns of Lakia and Hartland now stand, about thirty miles west of Garden City. On the north rose the peak of the Indian Mound, a curious formation of the river bluffs which is so often asserted to be a relic of the Mound-Builders. Equally distant on the south was the Arkansas River.

Within the wagon-intrenched camp was the leafless trunk of "Old Cottonwood," a large tree, the only one within miles, which lightning had killed, but which still served as a landmark for every one who passed along the Santa Fé trail. The moon was almost full, and by its light, incredibly brilliant on the Western Plains, the Indians could be seen making their preparations. At midnight, just where the shadow of the old tree fell, the treasure was buried. For some reason, the Indians failed to attack that night, and the next day the train moved forward with its dogged pursuers just visible.

Three days later, when Pawnee Rock had been reached, the attack was made. Only one man survived it. Weeks later, raving with the horrors he had undergone, he staggered into Fort Leavenworth. In the intervals of his delirium before he died, he told his story.

The next year an effort was made to recover the gold. But the lightning had finished its work, and not even a stump remained of "Old Cottonwood." The buffalo grass was thick over the place. The treasure was never found, unless the Indians, returning, uncovered it and took it away with them.

The entire country between the Indian Mound and the river for miles in either direction has been dug over repeatedly. The land has changed hands more than once, but the proviso is always insisted upon that a certain proportion of the treasure, if it is recovered, shall revert to the original holder.

Eastern Kansas has a buried treasure that is even more enticing than the Indian gold of the West, for while it is not so large, yet its origin is so recent and so certain that success in finding it seems almost assured.

Two miles south of East Atchison is the Hutson farm of two hundred acres. It was owned by Isaac Hutson, who died in 1879. He was ill a long time, but expected to recover. When he realized that death was inevitable, he called his family around him and told them of an iron kettle, with a marble slab from the top of a wash-stand as a cover. He did not tell exactly where the money was buried, but said that whoever ploughed deepest would find it.

The land passed into the hands of his brother, Pete Hutson, who would never allow a search to be made for the money. At his death, a short time ago, the farm went to his son, Will Hutson, but he, too, has never attempted to find the treasure. He says that he can locate it within a zone of forty acres and that some day he will recover it.

A buried treasure tale of northern Kansas contains a gruesome touch. It is related that a party of returning gold-seekers were crossing the plains of northern Kansas, each man with his gold-dust safely stowed away in a belt around his body, when one of the number was attacked with smallpox and died almost immediately. Too fearful of the disease to touch the body long enough to remove the treasure-belt, the remaining men hurriedly scooped out a deep grave on the prairie, and with deep poles pushed their companion's body into it, filled it up and then hastened on without leaving anything to mark the spot.

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Since that time many persons, their stupidity overcoming their fear of infection, have endeavored to locate the unmarked grave, but their efforts have been fruitless, and the dead miner's precious dust is still his own.

OKLAHOMA'S interest in buried treasure received a tremendous impetus in 1904 by the reported find of $80,000 near the town of Kildare, and by the further alleged discovery of $210,000 by a Mexican near Muskogee, I. T., between Caddo and Boggy depots. In neither instance was the money produced in evidence, it having been spirited away by the alleged finders, who also have disappeared. But the rusty, earth-covered kettles and vases in which the treasure was hidden have been viewed by hundreds and are quite sufficient to stir up the enthusiasm of the most unenthusiastic hunter.

Whatever buried treasure there may be found in Oklahoma or the Indian Territory, either now or hereafter, will invariably be ascribed to "Old Ben" Marshall. To recover Old Ben Marshall's gold has for generations been the secret ambition of thousands of residents of the respective State and Territory. Marshall was the most noted of that landed aristocracy, half-white, half-Indian, which included the wealthy citizens of the Territory at the beginning of the civil war.

When the war broke out he suddenly disappeared. At its close he turned up at Stonewall, in the Chickasha Nation. A little later he returned to the old place in a wagon with one of his farm-hands, and proceeded to dig up all the gold that he had left buried there. He drove away with $60,000 in sacks in the back of his wagon.

When he reached Stonewall he buried the money again, so secretly that not even his wife knew its location. The farm-hand who had assisted him mysteriously disappeared, and a few months later the old man himself died. His secret went into the grave with him, and though repeated searches have been made not a cent of his hoard has ever been discovered.

The oldest buried treasure in Oklahoma is the Tres Piedras gold, the legend of which has been handed down for so long by the Catholic priests of Old Mexico that the actual amount was long ago lost sight of. According to the story, a Spanish party in search of a fabled El Dorado set out across the plains to the northeast of Mexico. Every ten or fifteen miles they set up a post of stone marked with the letter V, to guide their return course. They finally reached that country directly north of the Panhandle of Texas which was for years known as No Man's Land, but which is now Beaver County, Okla. When near what is now the town of Garrett, they decided that the only hope of saving the treasure they had with them from the pursuing Indians was to bury it.

To mark the place they set the remaining guide-posts in a huge circle, half a mile apart, and so placed that the point of each V was directed to a spot in the center of the circle. At this spot the treasure, said to have been enormous, was buried. Shortly afterward the party was set upon, and all but one massacred. This man succeeded in getting home, but was so exhausted by exposure that he died before he could give complete directions for the recovery of the treasure. An effort was made to follow the trail, but it was lost near the town of Santa Fé.

Recently there came to Beaver County an Irishman, Michael Ryan, who had lived among the Mexicans. He was found digging very industriously in the basin between the Cimarron and Corrumpa Rivers. When questioned he asserted that he had discovered the guide-posts, and had located the center of the often-described circle.

The next day he was not to be seen, and has not been seen since, so it is not known what success he had. Ryan was not the only person who had attempted to locate the treasure, for more than once men have come from Mexico to Beaver County with charts and maps and have endeavored to recover the Castilian wealth.

A fortune of $100,000 in gold dust awaits the lucky digger on the farm of Joe Boulanger in the Osage Nation, near Pawhuska, in the eastern part of the Territory. A Missourian named Goldie, having made his pile in the mines of California, undertook to guide a party of his friends back to the States. Near what is now the town of Kansas, he quarreled with a scout. The

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scout, for revenge, arranged with a band of warlike Pawnee Indians to capture the party and secure the treasure it carried.

Accordingly the wagon-train was followed and finally surrounded. Goldie, realizing the danger, secured all the gold in the party, saying that he meant to bury it on the edge of the timber to save it from the Indians. In the darkness he eluded, not only the Indians, but his companions as well, and made his escape. Meantime the remainder of the party was attacked and massacred. The next morning the scout discovered that the treasure as well as his enemy had escaped him. He found Goldie's trail, and followed it.

Goldie determined to make still another effort to save the gold. He chose a spot on what is now known as Artillery Mountain, marked by a large tree, peculiarly twisted, and there buried the glistening dust. Later he succeeded in covering his trail so effectually that the Indians and the scout failed to capture him.

He arrived home safely, but before he could return to recover the treasure he was taken ill and died. He related the entire incident to his wife, and gave her directions for locating the spot.

But she would trust the secret to no one, and, being in comfortable circumstances, she decided to wait until her son, then a child of six, should reach manhood. In 1882 the first search for the treasure was made. The place had been bought and cleared by a civilized Indian named Boulanger, who, however, remembered the location of the peculiar tree described.

The stranger who questioned him dug near the spot for several days, and finally told Boulanger the story, saying that he was Goldie's son. Since that time many attempts have been made to find the supposed treasure, but so far as is known none of it has ever been recovered.

LAKE AND RIVER TREASURES

FOR forty-eight years, at the bottom of Lake Huron in twenty-seven fathoms of water, the treasure-ship *Pewabiac* has reposed. At the time of her sinking she carried cargo and currency to the amount of $540,000. Many attempts have been made to locate and recover the precious metal forming her cargo. Although the treasure has been located twice—once in 1877 and again in 1894—no mark was left to show the spot where the submerged fortune lay. Sums of money aggregating $85,000, and five lives have been expended in attempts to wrest this treasure from its hiding-place.

The search for this money has been a tragedy almost as black as the one which marked the night when it sank beneath the surface of the lake. The treasure consists of 380 tons of copper ingots, $365,000 in gold, and $15,000 in currency, the character of which is not known, but presumably being greenbacks of the period.

There are many tales of Mississippi River gold. There are hulks in that stream's bed that must contain tens of thousands of dollars in gold. There were hundreds of steamers burned, snagged, and otherwise sent to the bottom. Every one that went down had money on board. It was not uncommon for a river steamer to have a hundred thousand dollars for safe keeping in the purser's possession. When the boat sank, the gold went with it. Mississippi River shanty-boatmen, when the current throws up an old hulk, never fail to search it, sometimes digging away the drifted sand to get to the bottom. What luck they have is problematical. However, a shanty-boatman throwing old-time gold coin on saloon bars is not unknown.

Strictly speaking, of course, this is not "hidden gold." It is gold lost to the world through shipwreck, and comes under the head of sunken treasure ships. Long searches were made for some of the treasure in river-steamer wrecks. A good deal was recovered by wreckers, among the most notable of whom was James B. Eads, who built the famous St. Louis Bridge. Captain Eads rigged a diving-bell, by means of which he was able to tramp along the bottom of the Mississippi in his search for lost steamboats and their contents.

The largest amount ever lost in a wreck on the Mississippi was two million dollars on its way to Grant's army investing Vicksburg. The steamer burned and the money was lost, but no one seems to know just how. Some think it was rescued from the flames, some that the boat was set on fire to cover its theft, some that it was lost by a gambling officer, and some that it burned

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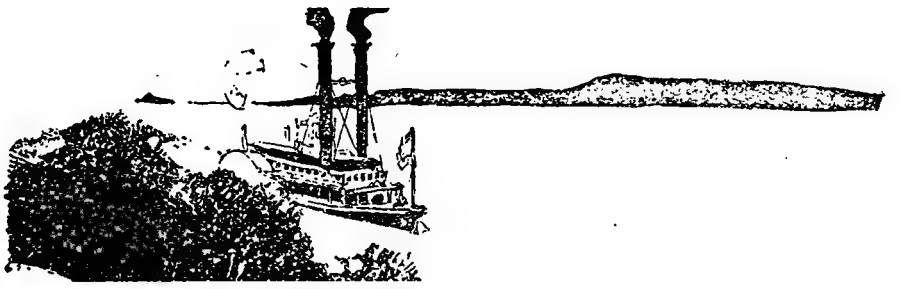

accidentally. It is not even known whether the money was all in paper or not.

Of hidden treasure, the Mississippi banks have their share, and more. River pirates buried and lost large sums. At Plum Point, in Rowdy Bend at Natchez-under-the-Hill, at Big Island, opposite Fort Pillow, at the mouth of the St. Francis, and in several other places there were pirate gangs. Tradition says that when the gangs divided their booty from river boats some invariably buried their own share, or a large part of it. Search for this hidden wealth is made from time to time, not always without avail.

Then, too, war caused the hiding of much silver, gold and jewels. One of the curious stories relates to the discovery of one of these hidden hoards. A shanty-boat junkman went among the negroes on a plantation below Red River Landing a few years ago. An old mammy said she had some old truck which she would be glad to sell. She told the junkman about finding it in the corner of a chicken coop. She brought out about forty pounds of old metal, and the junkman paid her for it at the rate of old brass—five cents a pound. He dumped the load in the hold of his boat with other pickings; but one piece attracted his attention. It was a curiously wrought candlestick. He took it out and used it with candles about the boat.

When he subsequently sold the boat and cargo to another junkman at New Orleans, he retained the candlestick and carried it to Evansville on the Ohio River. There a friend noticed its great weight. When tested by a jeweler, it was found to be gold of about the purity used by the old French in such articles. The jeweler paid ninety-five dollars for the candlestick.

Shanty-boatmen do much speculating as to what became of the other forty pounds. Was it melted up with the rest of the load of brass, or did some junkman or founder discover the true nature of the metal?

Probably the richest treasure in any of these river wrecks is that of the *Bedford*, sunk April 25, 1840, at the mouth of the Missouri River. The boat had a heavy passenger list and there was said to be a large amount of gold and silver on board. One passenger is known to have had $6,000 in gold in his trunk, while estimates of the total amount of gold and silver on board range anywhere between $25,000 and $100,000. In the boat's safe was said by one report to have been more than $25,000 on deposit by passengers, in addition to money of the owners paid to them for passage and to be used for trading.

The *Bedford* struck a snag after entering the mouth of the river and sank until only its smokestack showed—all within one minute. Fifteen of the passengers were drowned. A terrible rainstorm was raging at the time and the night was pitch dark. Since the sinking of the *Bedford* the mouth of the river has moved south several miles, leaving the wreck of the steamer buried under land that is now being farmed.

Another boat which would yield a treasure to its finders is the *Bertrand*, which sank in 1865 in Bertrand Bend, near Portage La Force, Nebraska, with a cargo in which there were iron flasks containing more than $25,000 worth of quicksilver destined for the mines of Montana. Probably the most valuable cargo ever lost in the river was that on the *Butte*, which sank July 13, 1883, near Fort Peck, Montana. The cargo was valued at $110,000 and was said to be a large quantity of gold-dust from the Montana mines.

The *Boreas*, which sank near Hermann, Missouri, in 1846, after burning, carried a large quantity of silver bullion and Mexican dollars. The boat was supposed to have been set afire by men who expected to steal

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the treasure, but the fire spread so fast they were forced to jump overboard to save their lives, without getting at the silver. Nearly all the boats coming down the river until along in the early 'eighties carried more or less gold and silver from the Montana mines, and passengers coming from the West frequently were miners who carried their wealth in gold-dust. The records of losses of this kind, however, are very indefinite. In many cases boats sank so quickly that passengers and crew had barely time to save themselves without heeding any treasure that might have been on board.

In other cases boats sank in shallow water and everything was saved and the boats were raised again. Many of these boats are now buried under dry land, due to the shifting of the river channel, where if they could be located it would be an easy matter to explore them. In some cases the wrecks are still in the channel and can be seen at low water.

THE CRUISE OF THE *PILOT'S BRIDE*

IN JULY, 1912, the yacht *Pilot's Bride* sailed from Tampa, Florida, with a party of treasure-hunters from Palatka. Upon their arrival at Bradentown they secured the services of several negroes, bought an outfit consisting of shovels, picks, axes and other necessary articles needed for digging. They then proceeded to the mouth of the Manatee River, where a supposed fortune awaited them.

For two days and nights the party busied itself digging a hole large enough to bury the wickedest pirate, together with all his crew, but with no success as far as can be learned. Bits of the story of this search for hidden gold may only be picked up here and there, as the party was scattered before the real mission of the trip was discovered. The negroes became frightened and ran back to Bradentown with neither gold nor treasure. Captain Clark of Palatka, known as a retired steamboat officer, led the party and directed the men where to dig.

Several weeks later another party left Tampa to seek treasure in Coral Creek, and claim to have found gold, lead and copper on the end of a long bit after boring into a box on the bottom of the creek. But proofs were lacking. Thus are repeated the old stories which have to do with buried gold and pieces of eight said to have been buried in the vicinity of Tampa.

THE DISHONEST DOLLARS OF CHARLES GIBBS

CHARLES GIBBS, the more or less well-known pirate, squandered a great part of his treasure, but it may be some consolation to treasure-hunters to know that some $20,000 of it, in silver coin, was buried on the beach of Long Island, a few miles from Southampton. This is attested by the records of the United States Court of the Southern District of New York. Captain Gibbs was a thoroughly bad egg, from first to last, and quite modern, it is interesting to note, for he was hanged as recently as 1831. He was born in Rhode Island, raised on a farm, and ran away to sea in the navy.

It is to his credit that he is said to have served on board the *Chesapeake* in her famous battle with the *Shannon*, but after his release from Dartmoor as a British prisoner of war, he fell from grace and opened a groggery in Ann Street, called the "Tin Pot," "a place full of abandoned women and dissolute fellows." He drank up all the profits, so went to sea again and found a berth in a South American privateer. Leading a mutiny, he gained the ship and made a pirate of her, frequenting Havana, and plundering merchant vessels along the Cuban coast. He slaughtered their crews in cold blood and earned an infamous reputation for cruelty.

In his confession, written while he was under sentence of death in New York, he stated that some time in the course of the year 1819, he left Havana, and came to the United States, bringing with him about $30,000 in gold. He passed several weeks in the city of New York, and then went to Boston, whence he took passage for Liverpool in the ship *Emerald*. Before he sailed, however, he had squandered a large amount of his money by dissipation and gambling. He remained in Liverpool a few months and then returned to Boston. His residence in Liverpool at that time is satisfactorily

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ascertained from another source besides his own confession.

Gibbs was not as successful as formerly in his profession of piracy and appears to have lost his grip. For several years he knocked about the Seven Seas in one sort of shady escapade or another, but he flung away whatever gold he harvested and was driven to commit the sordid crime which brought him to the gallows. In November of 1830, he shipped as a seaman in the brig *Vineyard*, Captain William Thornby, from New Orleans to Philadelphia with a cargo of cotton and molasses and $54,000 in specie.

Learning of the money on board, Gibbs cooked up a conspiracy to kill the captain and the mate, and persuaded the steward, Thomas Wansley, to help him put them out of the way. According to the testimony, others of the crew were implicated, but the court convicted only these two. The sworn statement of Seaman Robert Dawes is as red-handed a treasure story as could be imagined.

"When about five days out, I was told that there was money on board. Charles Gibbs, E. Church and the steward then determined to take possession of the brig. They asked James Talbot, another member of the crew, to join them. He said no, as he did not believe there was money in the vessel. They concluded to kill the captain and mate, and if Talbot and John Brownrigg would not join them, to kill them also.

"The next night they talked of doing it, and got their clubs ready. I dared not say a word, as they declared they would kill me if I did. As they did not agree about killing Talbot and Brownrigg, their two shipmates, it was put off. They next concluded to kill the captain and mate on the night of November 22d, but did not get ready; but on the night of the 23d, between twelve and one o'clock, when I was at the helm, the steward came up with a light and a knife in his hand. He dropped the light and seizing the pump-break, struck the captain with it over the head or back of the neck. The captain was sent forward by the blow and halloed, 'Oh!' and 'Murder!' once.

"He was then seized by Gibbs and the cook, one by the head and the other by the heels, and thrown overboard. Atwell and Church stood at the companionway to strike down the mate when he should come up. As he came up and inquired what was the matter, they struck him over the head, then he ran back into the cabin, and Charles Gibbs followed him down; but as it was dark, he could not find him. Gibbs then came on deck for the light with which he returned below. I left the helm to see what was going on in the cabin. Gibbs found the mate and seized him, while Atwell and Church came down and struck him with a pump-break and club.

"The mate was then dragged upon deck. They called for me to help them and as I came up, the mate seized my hand and gave me a death grip. Three of them hove him overboard, but which three I do not know. The mate was not dead when cast overboard, but called after us twice while in the water. I was so frightened that I hardly knew what to do. They asked me to call Talbot, who was in the forecastle saying his prayers. He came up and said it would be his turn next, but they gave him some grog and told him not to be afraid, as they would not hurt him. If he was true to them, he should fare as well as they did. One of those who had been engaged in the bloody deed got drunk and another became crazy.

"After killing the captain and mate they set about overhauling the vessel, and got up one keg of Mexican dollars. Then they divided the captain's clothes and money—about forty dollars—and a gold watch. Talbot, Brownrigg and I, who were all innocent men, were obliged to do as we were commanded. I was sent to the helm and ordered to steer for Long Island. On the day following, they divided several kegs of the specie, amounting to five thousand dollars each, and made bags and sewed the money up. After this division, they divided the rest of the money without counting it.

"On Sunday, when about fifteen miles S.S.E. of Southampton Light, they got the boats out and put half the money in each, and then they scuttled the vessel and set fire to it in the cabin and took to the boats. Gibbs, after the murder, took charge of the vessel as captain. From the papers on board, we learned that the money belonged to Stephen Girard.

"With the boats we made the land about daylight. I was in the long-boat with three others. The rest with Atwell were in the jolly-boat. On coming to the bar the boats stuck, and we threw overboard a great deal of money, in all about five thousand dollars. The jolly-boat foundered. We saw it fill

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and heard them cry out, and saw them clinging to the masts. We went ashore on Barron Island, and buried the money in the sand, but very lightly. Soon after, we met a gunner, whom we requested to conduct us where we could get some refreshments.

"We were by him conducted to Johnson's (the only man living on the island) where we stayed all night. I went to bed about ten o'clock. Jack Brownrigg sat up with Johnson and in the morning told me that he had told Johnson all about the murders. Johnson went in the morning with the steward for the clothes which were left on the top of the place where they buried the money, but I don't believe they took away the money."

Here was genuine buried treasure, but the circumstances were such as to make the once terrible Captain Charles Gibbs cut a wretched figure. To the ignominious crime of killing the captain and the mate of a little trading-brig had descended this freebooter of renown who had numbered his prizes by the score and boasted of slaying their crews wholesale.

As for the specie looted from the brig *Vineyard*, half the amount was lost in the surf when the jolly-boat foundered, and the remainder buried where doubtless that hospitable resident, Johnson, was able to find most of it. Silver dollars were too heavy to be carried away in bulk by stranded pirates, fleeing the law, and these rascals got no good of their plunder.

THE SILVER BARS OF WILLIAM PHIPS

WILLIAM PHIPS, one time Governor of Massachusetts, is an exception to the usual run of treasure-seekers, for he found sunken treasure and succeeded in raising more than a million and a half of silver.

William Phips came of English stock, and was born on the Maine coast in 1650. He had twenty brothers and five sisters, and spent his early days caring for sheep. Tiring of this, and with a longing for a more intimate knowledge of the sea he apprenticed himself to a shipwright who had a shop near the settlement where the youth was born.

While working at his chosen trade, the lad lent a willing ear to the tales told by skippers who had made the perilous voyages to the West Indies, with an eye for privateers and pirates. Here it was that he heard of treasures lost in Spanish galleons and buried by pirates.

In his early twenties he went into the ship-building business on his own account. He removed to Boston. Here along the waterfront he learned of more silver-laden galleons wrecked on various low-lying reefs of the unbuoyed, uncharted West Indies. So taken was he with these yarns of sunken treasure that in the year 1681 he headed for the West Indies on a small vessel, where he spent some time in prowling around the keys and islands of those waters.

That this voyage of Phips was a daring venture may be better realized when it is stated that those waters were still swarming with pirates and cutthroats who would have cheerfully slit his throat for a single piece of eight. Panama had been sacked by Morgan but eleven years before; while the Island of Tortuga and the Isle of Pines were still the headquarters of villainous gangs of freebooters and pirates, men who had been ravaging the seas with Bartholomew Portugez, Montbars, and Pierre le Grande.

Phips returned with a small amount of treasure, enough to furnish him with the wherewithal to make a voyage to England. He knew where there was more treasure, but realized that a large ship and crew of fighting men were needed to secure it. Captain Phips intended to find backing in London for the new venture; so after crossing the Atlantic he went ashore with his tale of treasure under water.

It was no less a person than the King himself whom Phips was bent on having for a partner, and he was not to be driven from the palace by lords or flunkies. With bulldog persistence he held to his purpose month after month, until almost a year had

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passed. At length, through certain friends he had made at Court, he gained the ear of Charles II., and that game monarch was pleased to take a fling at treasure-hunting as a sporting proposition, with an eye also to a share of the plunder.

He gave Phips a frigate, the *Rose*, eighteen guns, which had been captured from the Algerian Corsairs. As "Captain of the King's Ship," Phips recruited a crew of all sorts, mostly hard characters, and sailed from London in September, 1683, bound first to Boston, and thence to find the treasure. While in Boston harbor in the *Rose*, Captain Phips carried things with a high hand, for another skipper had got wind of the treasure and was about to sail for the West Indies in a ship called the *Good Intent*.

Phips tried to bluff him, then to frighten him, and finally struck a partnership so that the two vessels sailed in company. Refusing to show the Boston magistrates his papers, Phips was haled to court where he abused the bench in language blazing with deep-sea oaths, and was fined several hundred pounds. His sailors got drunk ashore and fought the constables and cracked the heads of peaceable citizens. Staid Boston was glad when the *Rose* frigate and her turbulent company bore away for the West Indies.

There was something wrong with Phips's information, or the Spanish wreck had been cleaned of her treasure before he found the place. The *Rose* and *Good Intent* lay at the edge of a reef somewhere near Nassau for several months, sending down native divers, and dredging with such scanty returns that the crew became mutinous and determined on a program very popular in those days. Armed with cutlasses, they charged aft and demanded of Phips that he join them in running away with the ship to drive a trade of piracy in the South Seas. Captain Phips, with most undaunted fortitude, rushed in upon them, and with blows of his bare hands felled many of them and quelled all the rest.

After subsequent mutinies, during which the doughty Captain held his own, Phips headed for Jamaica, where he discharged his mutineers and shipped other scoundrels in their stead, there being small choice at Jamaica where every alternate man had been pirating or was planning to go again. He filled away for Hispaniola, now Hayti and San Domingo, where every bay and reef had a treasure story of its own.

Captain William Phips lay at anchor off one of the rude settlements for some time, and his rough and ready address won him friends, among them an old Spaniard who had seen many a galleon pillaged by the pirates. From this informant Phips fished up a little advice about the true spot where lay the wreck which he had been seeking. Feeling quite certain that it was upon a reef a few miles to the northward of Port de la Plata, a port so-called it seemed, from the landing of some of the shipwrecked company with a boatful of plate saved from their sunken vessel, Phips headed for this spot.

The reef was explored with much care, but after protracted search, more trouble with his crew, and running short of provisions, Phips decided to return to England, refit and ship a new crew. He felt confident that he was on the right track, however, but felt that the riff-raff which he had picked up at Jamaica in place of the mutineers were hardly the sort of men to be trusted with a great store of treasure on board.

UPON reaching England, Captain Phips found his royal partner no longer in the land of the living. James II., the new king, needed all his warships, and he promptly took the *Rose* away from Phips and set him adrift to shift for himself. A man of weaker heart and less inflexible resolution might have been disheartened, but Phips made a louder noise than ever with his treasure-story, and would not budge from London. He was put in jail, but got himself out somehow, and then sought noble patrons with money to venture on another treasure-seeking voyage.

After a year had passed, Phips found some gentlemen of the Court, among them the Duke of Albemarle and Sir John Narborough, who put up some $12,000 to outfit a ship. These gentlemen also persuaded the king to grant Phips letters of patent, in return for which favor His Majesty was to receive one-tenth of the booty. Phips was to have a sixteenth of what he should recover.

In a small vessel called the *James and Mary*, Captain Phips set sail from England in 1686. Upon arriving off Port de la Plata,

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he had hewed out from a cottonwood-tree a large canoe, or dugout, to be used by a gang of native divers. For some time these men worked along the edge of a reef called the Boilers, guided by the story of the old Spaniard, but found nothing to reward their exertions.

But one morning when one of the men was looking over the side of the vessel he saw a "sea feather," a marine plant of such uncommon beauty that he called the attention of Captain Phips to it. An Indian diver was sent down to remove the plant from the rock upon which it appeared to be growing. Imagine the surprise and delight of the commander and crew when the diver bobbed up to the surface, not only with the sea feather, but with a report that what was apparently a rock, was an old galleon.

Other divers were sent down and a large bar of silver was brought to the surface. All hands were placed at work, with remarkable results, for within a very short time they had raised no less than *thirty-two tons* of silver!

While the treasure-seekers were hauling up the silver hand over fist, one Adderly, a seaman of the New Providence in the Bahamas, was hired with his vessel to help in the gorgeous salvage operations. But, after Adderly had recovered six tons of bullion, the sight of so much treasure was too much for him. He took his share to the Bermudas and led such a gay life with it that he went mad and died after a year or two.

Hard-hearted William Phips was a man of another kind, and he drove his crew of divers and wreckers, the sailors keeping busy on deck at hammering from the silver bars a crust of limestone several inches thick from which they knocked out whole bushels of pieces-of-eight which were grown thereinto.

At length Phips ran short of provisions. Most reluctantly he decided to run for England with his precious cargo and return the next year. He swore all his men to secrecy, knowing that there was more treasure in the wreck.

Up the Thames sailed the lucky *James and Mary* in 1687, with three hundred thousand pounds sterling freightage of treasure in her hold, which would amount to a good deal more than a million and a half dollars to-day. The king was given his tenth of the cargo, and a handsome fortune it was. To Phips fell his allotted share.

Uncontented with his one-sixteenth, William Phips resolved to have still another try at the wreck, and this time there was no lack of ships and patronage. A squadron was fitted out in command of Sir John Narborough, and one of the company was the Duke of Albemarle. They made their way to the reef, but the remainder of the treasure had been lifted, and the expedition sailed home empty-handed. Adderly of New Providence had babbled in his cups, and one of his men had been bribed to take a party of Bermuda wreckers to the reef. The place was soon swarming with all sorts of craft, some of them from Jamaica and Hispaniola, and they found a large amount of silver before they stripped the wreck clean.

The king offered Phips a place as one of the Commissioners of the Royal Navy, but he was homesick for New England and desired to be a person of consequence in his own land. His friends obtained for him a patent as High Sheriff of Massachusetts, and he returned to Boston after five years' absence.

This rough ship-carpenter, sea-dog and treasure-seeker rose so high in the good graces of the English throne that in 1692 William III. made him first royal governor of Massachusetts. And as an administrator he was no less successful than when he was cruising for treasure off the coast of Hispaniola.

THE SUNKEN TREASURE OF THE ZUYDER ZEE

NO STORY of sunken treasure is more interesting than that of the wreck of the treasure-ship *Lutine*, over a century ago. In almost all the accounts of the wreck of the *Lutine* it is stated as a fact that the frigate was bound to the Texel, and that the bullion and treasure she carried, and which was lost in her, was designed for the payment of the British forces in the Netherlands.

Both statements are without foundation, as proved by a careful search in archives of the Admiralty. These official records show that the *Lutine* was under orders to sail, not to the Texel, but to the river Elbe, her

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destination being Hamburg, and that the treasure on board was not the property of the British government, but that of a number of London merchants connected with Lloyd's, and that the business of sending the coin and bullion was purely commercial.

When the *Lutine* set out on her voyage England and France were at war. Because of this war and other international complications, Hamburg had suddenly become the principal market for a great part of Northern Europe. The suddenness of its rise to importance had taxed the old Hanseatic town's banking facilities almost to the breaking point, and delays in payments by English and French merchants to Germans, due to the war, had caused many failures in Germany.

Hardly had the *Lutine* cleared the port before she ran full into a gale. It grew in violence throughout the day, until, when darkness had fallen, it bested the *Lutine's* crew, and drove the ship ashore on the Dutch coast, between the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling, which lie off one of the entrances to the Zuyder Zee.

The ship struck with such force that she went over on her beam ends. Those on board had scarcely a chance. Something like three hundred of them were drowned; only two got out alive, and of these one survived only a few hours, and the other lost his mind.

The specie on the frigate had been insured by Lloyd's, London's famed insurance center, which is still in existence. The underwriters paid what was due to the shippers of the gold, judging the *Lutine* a total loss, since the King of Holland, at the instance of the French, had declared the wrecked ship and her contents spoils of war.

For about a year the wreck was untouched, except for the meddlings of Dutch fishermen, who had got wind of the treasure and longed to get hold of some of it. Their activities aroused the Dutch Government to a realization of the wealth at its doors, and in 1800 and 1801 official salvage work was begun.

But all sorts of difficulties, principally the inadequate nature of diving dress at the time, combined to thwart the treasure-seekers, and the storms of successive years buried the hulk deeper and deeper. Attempts were made to get at the treasure in 1814 and 1823, but they were unavailing. In the latter year the King of Holland resigned his rights in the submerged gold to King George IV., who promptly made it over to Lloyd's, as partial indemnification for the loss sustained by that concern as insurers of the frigate's cargo.

Lloyd's made a half-hearted attempt to recover the treasure in 1828, after which they did nothing for twenty-eight years. Then—in 1855—they went to work again in conjunction with a Dutch company, known as the Decretal Salvers. This time they used divers attired in something like up-to-date garb, and a small sum of money was recovered.

Whetted by this bit of success, the salvage-workers went ahead more actively than ever. Finally, in April, 1858, nearly sixty years after the *Lutine* had gone to the bottom, the first bar of bullion was hoisted from her vitals. By the middle of October, gold and silver bars and coins to the value of $140,000 had been recovered. It looked as if all obstacles had been surmounted—that the recovery of the entire big shipment was merely a question of time and perseverance.

But the treacherous sands of the Dutch coast shifted before the operations could be resumed the following Spring, and completely covered those portions of the hulk where divers had made their find. Nevertheless, they stuck to the job and managed to get seven more bars. But the sand spread relentlessly, and they had to surrender to it. Next season they went at it again, until the total treasure salvaged reached the sum of $220,000.

Then they left the wreck alone until 1867, and then again—except for sporadic and practically barren attempts—until 1886. In that year steam-suction shell-dredgers were used for the first time, and during the ensuing four years a total of over 11,000 coins was recovered, aggregating in value about $4,600, but not a single bar of gold or silver came to the surface.

Attempts in 1894 and 1902 were insignificant in results. Then in 1911, the National Salvage Association took a hand in the game. Aided by powerful suction dredges they soon uncovered a good portion of the wreck, and started on the quest of the treasure along entirely new lines.

Between 1800 and 1912 over 100,000 pounds sterling have been salved from the wreck. It is estimated that the *Lutine's*

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cargo was worth $700,000. Again, it is estimated that the old ship contained treasure valued at 201,243 pounds sterling. But, no matter which estimate is the more nearly correct, it seems safe to assume that before the Spring of 1916 the bones of the old wreck will have been stripped clean of treasure.

Thus, modern equipment and ingenuity have been responsible for the recovery of gold and silver bars, Spanish pistoles, and Louis d'or, once borne by the ill-fated frigate.

ART TREASURES THAT HAVE BEEN RECOVERED

SPLENDID treasures of art which sank to the bottom of the Mediterranean two thousand years ago, when the galley bearing them from Greece to Rome was wrecked off the coast of Tunis, have recently been brought to the surface in dazzling quantity by divers in the employ of the French Government. Though the treasure-trove up to the present writing has scarcely been more than scratched by those engaged in wresting it from the grasp of the sea, the statues and other objects recovered indicate that the galley's cargo, if recovered entire, will be of a value that will put in the shade all other such finds in history.

The sunken ship lies in water one hundred feet deep about three miles from the coast village of Mahdia, in Tunis. There it was discovered four years ago by native sponge gatherers, who, in the course of their labors in the sea's depths stumbled across the wreck. The tales they told about their discovery induced M. Merlin, Director of Arts and Antiquities in the French colony of Tunisia, to put divers on the job of recovering the treasures described.

In all, Merlin has sent four expeditions to bring these treasures to the surface. The first two, which went out within a short time after the original discovery, were so remarkably successful as to inspire the most sanguine hopes for the future.

Those who discovered the wreck spoke only of statues, pillars, etc., which they had seen on the galley's deck. They made no effort to learn what might be in the hold. But Merlin's searchers found that the principal part of the precious cargo was stowed below decks.

The third expedition went out during 1910. The Winter weather put an end to the efforts of its divers. But now the Frenchmen and their native allies are hard at work hauling treasure after treasure to the surface. It is expected that the present expedition will have results that will eclipse those of its three predecessors.

In a recent number of the Paris *Figaro*, Marcel Dieulafoy, a member of the French Institute, tells the story of the treasure galley of Mahdia from its discovery to the inception of the present expedition's work.

The articles already discovered from its hold and deck and now collected at the Alaoul Museum in Tunis, include a number of extremely beautiful bronze statues. One is a replica of a statue by Praxiteles; a second bears the signature of another famous sculptor of antiquity. There are also valuable vases, pillars, and other objects of the golden age of Greek art.

Divers who have gone over the wreck declare that in it are no less than sixty white marble columns, piled six high, numerous marble statues, candelabra, gigantic vases, similar to those at the Louvre in Paris, and a large quantity of other articles, forming a whole of marvelous, inestimable value.

From inscriptions on some of the articles saved from the sea it is supposed that the galley sank at about the time when Cæsar was at the height of his power in Rome. In those days wealthy Romans went to the most extravagant extremes to adorn their city homes and their villas at Baiae, Pozzuoli, and other resorts. They collected the finest paintings, marbles and bronzes in existence. All corners of the world were ransacked for such works of art.

Naturally, as Rome had borrowed from Greece the best part of her culture, she looked to Greece for objects of art and sculpture. No nook of the Hellenic Peninsula was too remote, no price demanded by the owners of its art treasures was too exorbitant, to scare away these Romans.

Hence it was that galley after galley left Greek ports loaded deep with the most beautiful products of the artists of ancient Greece. Those who have studied what has been taken up from the galley of Mahdia are inclined to believe that it was but one of these many galleys, its cargo destined for the adornment of the homes of wealthy Romans.

In spite of the fact that it foundered close

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to the coast of Africa, these experts think it improbable that the cargo was intended for any city on that continent. Nothing discovered there up to the present time implies that the inhabitants of the cities of the African coast were addicted to such ostentation and luxury.

Nevertheless, one theory was advanced that the ship was bound to Cæsarea, and that its cargo was to be delivered to Juba II., the King of Mauretania. M. Dieulafoy is skeptical about that—he is all for believing that it was for the gorgeous Rome of Cæsar's day that the galley's precious freight was destined.

Be that as it may, the freight is of a kind that might well arouse either Imperial Cæsar or Moorish King to the most extravagant raptures. The bronze Praxiteles alone, which has lain so many centuries at the bottom of the sea, would be a gift worthy to adorn the finest palace in the world.

It represents Eros, god of love, and is one meter forty centimeters in height. According to the writer of the article in the *Figaro*, it is an excellent replica of Praxiteles, dating from the fourth century B. C.

"I call it a replica," says M. Dieulafoy, "but when the subject and the date of the statue are taken into consideration, the word 'original' would be more correct, since the work is a priceless one, famous in ancient times."

The original Eros was carved by Praxiteles a few years before his famous Apollo and Hermes. According to the *Figaro*, it is well worthy, from any point of view, to be compared with those masterpieces.

Another bronze found in the Mahdia wreck is a Hermes signed with the well-known name of Boethos Chalkedonios. This artist is famed as the sculptor of a statue of Antiochus IV., King of Syria, who reigned from 175 to 164 B. C. In addition to being an excellent sculptor Boethos was likewise highly skilled as a worker in gold and silver. The most famous work by him which has survived the ages is known as the "Child Strangling a Goose." This group was so famous in ancient times that it was copied innumerable times.

Two other statuettes taken from the wrecked galley represent two competitors in a torch race. In such a race the runners were obliged to keep their torches alight, in spite of the great speed at which they ran. One of these statuettes represents the torch-bearer handing his torch to a comrade after he has covered his part of the course. The second shows the runner going at top speed. Owing to the beautiful workmanship of these torch-bearers the *Figaro* writer is of the opinion that they were made by Polycycles of Athens, a celebrated sculptor who flourished at Athens about the time that the doomed galley sailed from Greece.

All the above-mentioned treasures were found by the divers employed on the two expeditions that followed the discovery of the wreck in 1907. Finds no less precious were made by the expeditions of 1910. They include statues of a satyr, another Eros, two female dancers, and a male dancer.

All bear the unmistakable stamp of Greek art. Moreover, almost every one of them is in an excellent state of preservation. When the statues were brought to the surface and the accretions of barnacles and other growths removed from them they appeared in all their glorious beauty.

Already, all the show-cases in two big rooms of the Tunis Museum are filled with the gems of art taken from the wreck. Monsieur Merlin and those engaged with him in exploring the galley are confident that the present search will be even more successful than those which have preceded it.

In spite of the difficulties in the way of raising the cargo of a ship buried under one hundred feet of water, they intend, before counting the task done, to search the galley from stem to stern and recover everything of value that may be on board of her.

THE SALVING OF THE *OCEANA*

NEARLY four millions of dollars in actual cash went to the bottom of the sea on March 16, 1912, when the Peninsular and Oriental liner, *Oceana*, was rammed by the German bark *Pisagua* off Beachy Head in England. Yet the times in which we live have grown so safe and the risks attendant on ocean voyages are considered so small that the *Oceana's* precious cargo was insured at the rate of about one-tenth of one per cent.—that is,

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every dollar of the precious cargo carried but one mill of insurance.

The low rate of insurance obtained in spite of the fact that the money was part of an advance being made by international bankers to the Chinese Government, to help it in the civil war in the Celestial Empire. In most cases, "war risks" raise the rate of insurance far above the ordinary. But it must be remembered that so far as the Chinese troubles were concerned, there was no reason for any additional charge for insurance of specie. The Chinese rebels had no armada, hence the approaches by sea to China were as safe as ever, and the big gold shipment on the *Oceana* really had nothing remarkable about it.

Those who insured the gold and silver did not by any means lose heart when the wreck of the *Oceana* was reported. They prophesied a quick recovery of the treasure. Nor were they wrong, for early in May, 1913, less than a year after the ramming of the steamship, the wreck gave up the last sack of coin. The *Oceana* had on board when she sank fifty-five bags of gold and silver coin, and 2,126 bars of silver valued all together at a little over $3,800,000. Of this, all has been recovered save two bars of silver.

THE DOUBTFUL FIND OF THE *EUREKA'S* COMPANY

IN JUNE, 1911, a party of treasure-seekers aboard the steamer *Eureka* reported that their expedition to recover an immense cache of gold hidden by the crew of a Chilean cruiser off the Honduran coast many years ago, had been successful. The value of the treasure had been estimated variously at amounts ranging between $15,000,000 and $65,000,000.

The expedition is said to have been financed by one Henry Krelling, a well-known clubman of San Francisco. A map, showing the location of the buried treasure, was said to have been in the possession of a former resident of Honduras, who succeeded in interesting Krelling in his tale of buried gold.

That this treasure was ever located is extremely doubtful, inasmuch as an Associated Press despatch from Washington was sent out June eighth as follows: "The movements of the steamer *Eureka* have given much concern to the State and Navy departments for a month. The Nicaraguan Minister here learned that the vessel had cleared from San Francisco about May twelfth for the Bay of Fonseca, on the west coast of Nicaragua, supposedly with arms and ammunition. Señor Castrillo, the Nicaraguan Minister, suspected a revolutionary expedition directed against the government of President Diaz.

"The gunboat *Yorktown* was despatched to overhaul and search the *Eureka*. Two days ago she reported to the Navy Department no arms had been found on the vessel."

Was this a case of filibusters masquerading as peaceful treasure seekers?

THE GOLD AND SILVER OF THE FRIGATE *THETIS*

IN 1830, the *Thetis*, a British frigate, sailed from Rio Janeiro for England. South American merchants who feared that pirates would capture merchant vessels had prevailed on the captain to carry for them eight hundred and ten thousand dollars' worth of gold and silver bars.

But a foe as merciless as the pirates attacked the *Thetis* within two days after the vessel left the wharf in Rio Janeiro. During a storm she was carried out of her course and was driven against the precipitous rocks off Cape Frio. The charging vessel pitched up all standing. Her hull had not touched bottom and there was nothing to check her enormous momentum. In a twinkling, literally in the space of a few seconds, her three masts were ripped out and fell on deck with all their hamper, killing and wounding many of the crew. Instead of that most beautiful sight in all the world, a ship under full sail and running free, there was a helpless hulk pounding out her life against the perpendicular wall of rock.

There seemed to be no escape for the men still alive. The vessel fell back from the cliff only to be dashed forward once more; this process was repeated until it seemed that the timbers would fall apart.

At last a number of the men managed to climb on a shelf of the cliff. A little later the hulk was driven into a little cove in the

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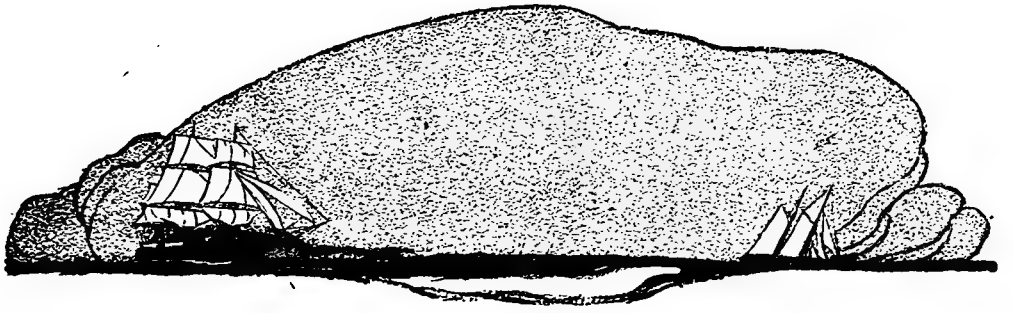

cliff. There it went to the bottom in deep water, with many of the men and all the treasure.

The news of the wreck was taken to Rio Janeiro. Captain Dickinson, in charge of another British vessel, hastened to the scene of the catastrophe, to see if he could recover the gold. The story of the heroic efforts made by himself and his men—efforts which continued for eighteen months—was told by the captain at the time in his narrative of the wreck and the salvage operations.

A diving-bell was needed in order to begin operations. As none could be secured at Rio Janeiro, Captain Dickinson made a diving-bell out of two immense water-tanks, used on board ship. An air-pump was next constructed. A hose through which to force air to the men in the improvised diving-bell being a necessity, the hose of a pump on board Captain Dickinson's vessel was beaten hard with a broad-faced hammer to render the texture as close as possible, in order to make it air-tight. The whole was then heavily coated with tar and covered with tarred canvas.

The makeshift diving-bell had to be suspended from something before it could be dropped into the water. When it was found to be impossible to stretch a cable from cliff to cliff across the cove, Captain Dickinson set to work to gather wreckage from which to fasten a huge derrick. From this the diving-bell should hang like a sinker at the end of a fishing-rod. Before long he had an immense derrick weighing forty tons, and one hundred and fifty-eight feet long. This was supported by means of an elaborate device rigged from the cliff.

Then the real work began. The diving-bell was sunk, sailors scoured the bottom and sent some gold to the surface. The work continued by night as well as by day. The red glare cast from the torches on every projection of the stupendous cliff rendered the deep shadows of their fissures and indentations more conspicuous. The rushing of the roaring seas into the deep chasm produced a succession of reports like those of cannon, and the assembled boats, flashing in and out of the gloom were kept in constant motion by the long swell.

Directions were given that the toilers were first to go to the outermost dollar, or other article of gold they could discover, and to place a bit of ballast, with a bright tally-board fast to it, against and on the inner side of the nearest fixed rock they could find. From this they were then to proceed to take up all that lay immediately on the surface of the bottom, but not to remove anything else until all that was visible was obtained. This being done, they were to return to the place first searched and, passing over the same ground, remove the small rocks and other articles, one by one, and progressively take up what might be recovered by such removal, but not on any account to dig without express orders from the captain.

Thirty days after the first gold was discovered, Captain Dickinson was able to send to England one hundred and thirty thousand dollars in bullion and specie, and he felt sure the remainder would be in his possession in a short time. Then came a terrific storm. His derrick was demolished, the diving-bell was lost, and the whole work of equipment had to be done over again.

That storm, as described by Captain Dickinson, must have been worth seeing. He watched the waves from the cliff. "The waves struck the derrick with steadily increasing force," he says, "and I watched with all the distressing feelings that a father would evince toward a favorite child when in a situation of great danger. By six

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o'clock the winds threw the waves obliquely against the southeast cliff and caused them to sweep along its whole length until opposed by the opposite cliff, from which each wave as it recoiled was met by the following one, and, thus accumulated, they rose in one vast heap under the derrick stage, beat it from under the bell, and washed away the whole. Yet the stage was thirty-eight feet above the water in time of calm."

The destruction wrought by this storm would not have been a serious matter if there had been shipyards at hand. But it was hundreds of miles to the nearest source of supply. Many men would have been discouraged; but Captain Dickinson began at the beginning once more. A cable was suspended from the cliffs, a new diving-bell was made from a water-tank, the air-pump was recovered from the sea, and salvage operations began once more.

For fourteen months the work continued. Then the heroic captain had the pleasure of knowing that fifteen-sixteenths of the gold had been brought to the surface.

The published report of Captain Dickinson has been called one of the most remarkable narratives of the kind ever written, not merely because a large part of the treasure was recovered, but also, and more, because of the "heroic courage and bulldog persistence" of the salvors. To use his own words: "They were treasure seekers whose deeds, forgotten by this generation, and grudgingly rewarded by their own, were highly worthy of the best traditions of the flag and the race."

THE HIDDEN GOLD OF INDIA

EVER since the dawn of history India has been gathering gold and hiding it away. Jewels and treasures of almost incalculable value are possessed by many Indian princes. When the Maharajah of Burdwan died, the stock of gold and silver left by him was so large that no member of the family could make an accurate estimate of it.

A report made to the British Government by a secret agent stated that on the estate of the defunct potentate were a number of treasure-houses, one of them containing three rooms. The largest of these rooms was forty-eight feet long, and was filled with ornaments of gold and silver, plates and cups, washing-bowls, jugs and so forth, all of precious metals. The other two rooms were full of bags and boxes of gold mohurs and silver rupees. The door of this and other treasure-houses had been bricked up for nobody knows how long.

These valuables, according to an ancient custom, were in the custody of the Maharajah's wife, the vaults being attached to her apartments, but none of them was allowed to be opened save in the presence of the master. One vault was filled with ornaments belonging to different gods of the family.

The natives of India commonly bury their hoards, and among the poorer classes a favorite hiding-place is a hole dug beneath the bed. Disused wells are sometimes employed for the same purpose. It is undoubtedly a fact that very many hoards thus deposited are lost forever. Gold is also valued on religious grounds. The gods take up great quantities of gold, silver and precious stones. The temples contain vast amounts of the yellow and white metals. The habit of hoarding seems to have been induced by ages of misgovernment, during which oppression and violence were rife. No feeling of safety existing, it was natural that the natives should adopt the practise of reducing their wealth to a concentrated shape and hiding it.

Both in ancient and modern times one of the stock objections of European nations against trade with India has been that that country absorbs a large amount of precious metals, which it never disgorges. It has naturally been asked what becomes of these treasures, for we do not find in India that abundance of either gold or silver which might naturally be expected; and the reply has always been that they are withdrawn from circulation as currency by being hoarded.

For ages it has been a prevalent opinion in all Eastern countries that there is a vast amount of treasures hidden in the earth, which unless found by accident is entirely lost to man. Regarding the hoarded wealth of the last century, it is not necessary to quote the well-known story of Lord Clive and the treasures of Moorshedabad, as narrated in Macaulay's "Essay on Lord Clive." That may be considered ancient history.

Speaking of modern times—the columns

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of the *Statesman* afford proof of the system of hoarding still practised in Bengal by the most enlightened managers of an estate in the most enlightened province of the Empire. About twenty-five years ago, in the course of the action for defamation brought against the *Statesman* by an ex-tutor of the late Maharajah of Burdwan, a deal of evidence came out about the hoarded treasures of Burdwan.

When such is the case on a great property which has long been under the enlightened influence of the British Government, what may be expected from the states of the semi-independent princes of Upper India?

Several years ago a prominent Englishman called upon the Chowringhee Lall, manager to the potentate Lalla Muttra Pershaud, who was in Gwalior on some temporary business. Among other subjects was discussed the action of the government in closing the Mints. The Hindu was asked his opinion about the possibility of a gold standard for India. The fact was mentioned that certain members of the Currency Association considered fifty million pounds sterling of gold would be sufficient to provide India with a gold currency.

The Lalla laughed the idea to scorn, and assured the Englishman that fifty millions would not suffice to replace the silver hoards of even one state.

"You know," he said, "how anxious the late Maharajah Scindia was to get back the fortress of Gwalior; but very few know the real cause prompting him. That was a concealed hoard of sixty *crores* (a little less than $200,000,000) of rupees in certain vaults within the fortress, over which British sentinels had been walking for about thirty years, never suspecting the wealth concealed beneath their feet.

"Long before the British Government gave back the fortress, every one who knew the entrance into the concealed hoard was dead, except one man who was extremely old, and although in good health, he might have died any day. If that had happened the treasure might have been lost to the owner forever, and to the world for ages, because there was only one entrance to the hoard, which was most cunningly concealed, and, except that entrance, every other part was surrounded by solid rock.

"So the Maharajah was in such a fix that he must either get back his fortress or divulge the secret to the Government, and run the risk of losing the treasure forever. When the fortress was given back to the Maharajah, and before the British troops had left Gwalior territory, masons were brought from Benares, sworn to secrecy in the Temple of the Holy Cow before leaving; and when they reached the Gwalior railway station they were put into carriages, blindfolded, and driven to the place where they had to work.

"There they were kept till they had opened out the entrance into the secret vault; and when the concealed hoard had been verified, and the hole built up again, they were once more blindfolded, put into carriages, and taken back to the railway and rebooked for Benares under a proper escort."

Such was the story told the Englishman. When he ventured to doubt its truth, and suggested that if the hoard had any existence in fact, sixty *lakhs* (hundred thousands), instead of sixty *crores* would be nearer the amount, Chowringhee Lall laughed at his ignorance, and declared that what he had told was a fact. He added that, although there were several smaller hoards, varying from sums of fifty *lakhs* to five and ten *crores*, some of which the Government got to know about, forcing the present Board of Regency to invest in Government of India bonds, that the existence of the great hoard was most unquestionable.

It was pointed out that such hoarded wealth could not be reconciled with the known revenue of the Gwalior state, even if the whole could have been hoarded for a generation. Chowringhee Lall then explained that the hoards were not accumulated from the revenues of the state, but were the accumulations of the plunder gathered by the Mahratta armies in the good old times when the Mahrattas systematically swept the plains of India; and that, Gwalior being their capital, the whole of their vast plunder was accumulated and hoarded there.

Chowringhee Lall is the authority for the statement that for generations before the rise of the British power, his ancestors had held the post of treasurer in the Gwalior state, and that after the British had annexed territories around Delhi, one of his great-granduncles had retired from the post of treasurer of Gwalior with a fortune of twenty *crores* of rupees.

By great good fortune all this money was quietly gotten into British territory,

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and, according to the Lalla, fifteen *crores* of it are this day bricked up in a secret vault under a Hindu temple, dedicated to the goddess of wealth in the holy city of Brindaban. The Lalla reasons that if the treasurer could accumulate so great a personal fortune, what might be the accumulations of the state itself?

THE treasures of Gwalior form but a very small amount compared with the total of the known concealed wealth of India. Directly the British Government decreed a gold currency for India, all the silver would be brought out and replaced by gold. "Five hundred millions of gold," said the Lalla, "would be absorbed and concealed before a gold currency was twelve months in circulation.

"Europeans, even those who have been in the country for years, have no idea of the hoarding propensities of even well-to-do natives, without counting the more wealthy bankers and traders. For example, my wife has more than three *lakhs* of rupees hidden, for fear of my dying before her, because I am much older than she is, and we have no son alive to inherit my property. And I know nothing about the place where this money is concealed."

The Lalla was asked how natives managed to accumulate so much wealth. Said he: "Take the house of any well-to-do native merchant with an income, say, of a thousand rupees per month, and at the very outside, fifty to a hundred rupees would purchase the whole of the furniture in it. Beyond a few *purdahs* (curtains) and beds, furniture in the European sense does not exist.

"Even the very wealthy, although they may have a carriage and horses, possess neither books nor pictures, nor any expensive works of art; and when a feast is given to their friends, a piece of plantain leaf serves each guest for a dish, where Europeans spend hundreds of rupees in dinner and breakfast services of fragile but most expensive china and glassware. All this the native saves and hoards. The wealthy conceal their accumulations of gold and silver in secret vaults, all except the ornaments which are reserved for and worn by their women.

"Natives don't believe," he continued, "in depositing their savings in banks or in investing them in government paper. No Marwaree touches Government paper, except for purposes of gambling. The trading classes in the large towns do use the banks to a great extent for temporary accounts because they are a great convenience, instead of keeping money required for current business in their houses.

"But very few natives invest their money in the European banks at interest at long dates, because they know that the stability of these banks depends on the stability of the government. The same ideas prevail in regard to Government paper. No Marwaree buys it as a permanent investment. The Marwarees merely use Government paper as a legitimate system of gambling."

That the foregoing account of the hidden treasures of India is not overdrawn is borne out by a recent report prepared by the Messrs. Montagu, bullion merchants of London. According to this report, that great hive of brown humanity, India, is the principal absorber of the world's surplus gold. There it disappears as if it had fallen into the abyss under a cataract.

"The people of India are inveterate hoarders of gold," runs the report. "They are as saving in their habits as the French, but instead of putting their savings out at interest they bury them. At present nearly all the gold dug from the earth in South Africa is, by a fresh digging operation, deposited again beneath the soil of South Asia. There, on about half the area of the United States, there are over three hundred millions of people who not only hoard gold, spending as little as possible, but who also use it in ways not familiar elsewhere. Thus, some of the Hindu employ the precious metal as a medicine, swallowing it in the form of thin leaves.

"They employ enormous quantities of

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gold for religious purposes, in gilding the domes and interiors of temples, and in decorating idols. They use it also for capricious display. A story is told of a Rajah who imported thousands of British sovereigns and used them to decorate the innumerable windows of his palace.

"India is enabled to import gold on a large scale, because whenever a succession of favorable monsoon winds blesses the country, its productiveness becomes phenomenal. But, apparently, when the dreadful famines, due to the failure of the monsoons, burst upon them, the people still guard their buried hoards, preferring to perish rather than seriously to diminish their stores."

Whether any of these walled-in treasures in the shape of gold and silver coin, priceless rubies and other jewels will ever see the light of day, only the future can tell. That they are well worth a long and persistent search, that money spent judiciously should accomplish substantial results, is not a far-fetched flight of fancy. The coin and jewels are there, dotting the peninsula in hundreds of spots. Who will be so fortunate as to find them?

MEDIEVAL HOARDS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

THAT stories of hidden treasure have always possessed a mysterious charm, and held a prominent place in the romance and traditions of most countries, is particularly true of the United Kingdom. But, unfortunately, in many cases such tales are not only wanting in corroborative proof, but must be regarded as more or less apocryphal, founded on little or no basis of fact.

But that all kinds of treasures lie concealed in the strangest and most unobtrusive spots can not be doubted, especially as, in years gone by, the earth oftentimes was the bank to which owners confided their money and values, and it would be impossible to say how much wealth lies hid.

Such a practise was only natural when it is remembered how, in consequence of civil commotions, many a home was in danger of being robbed of its most costly belongings. This circumstance would account for the secretion of treasure hoards in buildings, traditions relating to which are associated with many old English family mansions.

A curious old story is told of Thomas of Walsingham, which dates as far back as the fourteenth century. A certain Saracen physician came to Earl Warren to ask permission to kill a dragon which had its den at Bromfield, near Ludlow, and had committed great ravages in the Earl's lands. The dragon was overcome, but it transpired that a hoard of gold lay hid in his den. Some men of Herefordshire went by night to dig for the gold, and had just reached it when the retainers of the Earl of Warren captured them and took possession of the money for the earl.

A legend of this kind was long associated with Bransil Castle, a stronghold of great antiquity, about two miles from the Herefordshire beacon. The tale goes that it was moated round, and watched over by a black crow—presumed to be an infernal spirit—in charge of a chest of money till discovered by the rightful owner. This chest, it is added, could not be dislodged without the mover being in possession of Lord Beauchamp's bones.

Similarly at Huline Castle, formerly a seat of a branch of the Prestwich family, a hoard was generally supposed to have been hidden either in the hall itself, or in the grounds adjoining, and was said to be protected by "spells and incantations." Some years ago, the hall was pulled down, but although considerable care was taken to search every spot, no money was discovered.

In the same way Stokesay Castle, Shropshire, was reported to be possessed of a chest of treasure secreted in its vaults, but, as is only too often the case, no one has ever succeeded in discovering it. According to a local tradition the chest stands in the vaults still, and no one will ever be able to get possession of the chest till the key is found; and, as it is said in the neighborhood, "it never will be found, let folks try as much as they please."

A romantic story is told of Blenkinsopp Castle, which has long been haunted by a "white lady." It seems that its former owner, Bryan de Blenkinsopp, had an inordinate love of wealth which ultimately wrecked his fortune; for his wife in a fit of anger had a chest of gold concealed that took twelve of the strongest men to lift. Filled with remorse for her undutiful conduct the spirit of the unhappy woman is

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supposed to wander among the crumbling ruins of the old castle, mourning over the accursed wealth of which its rightful owner was deprived.

These treasure-legends differ largely in detail. At Addleborough, Yorkshire, for instance, there is the story of the giant who one day made a vow that he would carry his chest of gold over Addleborough in spite of God or man, but the coffer fell from his shoulder. The treasure now lies buried "till some fortunate person shall see a face with the form of a hen and an ape, and without speaking, shall draw out the long-buried hoard."

A local tradition tells us that, in a pool known as Wimhill Pond at Acton, Suffolk, is secreted an iron chest of money, and that if any one throw a stone into the water it will ring against the chest, a male white figure having been heard on several occasions to cry in accents of distress, "That's mine!" And a legend current in Shropshire mentions an old buried well, at the bottom of which is a large hoard, which has long been supposed to lie hidden.

At Buckton Castle—an earthwork following the natural lines of the summit of that hill on the borders of Yorkshire and Cheshire—an ancient tradition tempted the country people in 1730 to spend days in fruitless search with pick and shovel, for the missing treasure which lay hidden there. Since 1730 accident has disclosed some verification of the legend, for in the middle of the eighteenth century a chain of gold beads and ornaments were found close to the camp.

Near Mold, North Wales, was a cairn known as Brynyr-Ellylon, which means "The Goblin, or Fairy Mound," As its name implies, it was the subject of ancient superstition, and a specter "of unusual size, clothed in a coat of gold, which shone like the sun" was said to have been seen entering it. In 1833, when the mound was removed, a skeleton was discovered lying beneath a beautifully wrought piece of highly ornamented gold, three feet, seven inches long, and eight inches broad in the middle which has been variously described as a corselet, a shield and horse-armor. The superstition, however, attached to this mound can only be explained by some lingering tradition, passed down through a thousand years, of the burial of this remote chieftain in all his splendor.

In July, 1903, at a depth of five feet six inches below the surface, while foundations were being excavated for the new London and County Bank in High Street, Colchester, a leaden urn containing about eleven thousand "silver pennies" was discovered. Until a detailed description of the coins is forthcoming, it would be hazardous to found any theory of the cause of their deposit.

In 1831, in the course of removing a bank in the bed of the River Dove, some thirty yards below the present bridge at Tutbury, a vast quantity of "silver pennies," estimated at 20,000, of the reigns of Edwards I. and II., were discovered.

THERE is still a vast army chest lying but a few feet below English soil, compared to which all these discoveries pale into insignificance. This is the entire treasure of King John, including the ancient regalia of England, the jewels of the Normans, and perhaps even the crown of King Alfred. We know that it was lost in a quicksand, where the old road from Lynn to Swineshead crosses the "Wellesham" and that a gold coronet was once discovered in the sinking of a well in that neighborhood. Then the district was half and half water, but now the retrocession of the sea and the drainage of the fens ought to have rendered possible a discovery which was once hopeless.

That it will be recovered is but the repetition of history; but that no other attempt should be made to locate and recover a treasure, which, apart from its intrinsic value, would be of priceless worth to the British nation and to the whole archeological world, is incomprehensible. Surely the antiquarian and historian, guided by the discovery of the coronet and the records and traditions of the locality, can ascertain the vicinity, and the geologist locate the probable site, of the ancient quicksand. It is stated that the British Museum would pay at least five million pounds sterling for the recovery of this treasure.

Shortly after the year 1815, when the Napoleonic era was ended, a foreigner came to reside at the village of Stanmore, in Middlesex. Who he was or why he came, did not seem to be known; the villagers used to remark that he wandered about the fields in desultory sort of way, but beyond this they knew very little, and after a time he suddenly left the place.

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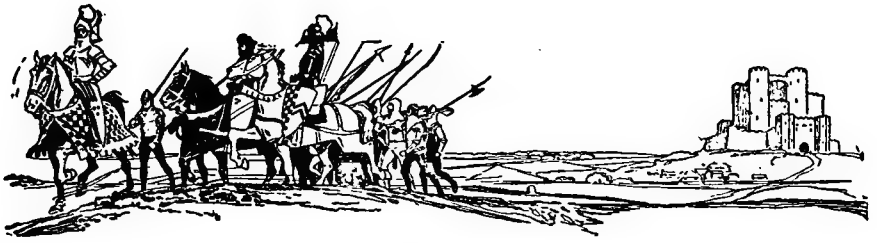

About two years after, a stranger appeared at Stanmore, stating that the foreigner was dead, that he had hidden a considerable amount of treasure, probably on account of some political troubles in which he had been involved, and that he had sketched a plan of a field near Stanmore where it was hidden. The stranger and the villagers searched, but found nothing. It was afterward noted that two elm-trees shown on the plan had been removed during the intervening period, and this probably threw the searchers in the wrong direction.

In January, 1836, however, the treasure was found, amounting to the sum of four thousand pounds, mostly in foreign gold coins. The finders claimed it, because "findings were keepings"; the rector claimed it, because it was found on the glebe-land of the rectory; the crown claimed it, in accordance with the ancient law. When the whole affair was investigated, the crown was declared to be the proper claimant, the heirs of the former owner not being traceable.

A case of treasure-trove, remarkable in some of its features, took place early in the year of 1863. On the twelfth of January, a farm laborer of Mountfield, in Sussex, while plowing, turned up a quantity of old brass (as it seemed to him) at about a foot beneath the surface. The metal was in the form of links or bars, about an inch and a half long by an inch wide, connected together into a chain about half a yard in length. At the end of the chain was a sort of trumpet. William Butchers, the finder, sold the chain to one Silas Thomas, who gave him three shillings for it, in its supposed capacity as eleven pounds of old brass. Thomas sold it to his brother-in-law, Stephen Willett, a cab-driver at Hastings.

Willett, who had once been a Californian gold-digger, discovered that the chain was made of gold. Antiquarians regret that the chain was melted down for the gold it contained. Judging from the three links left, it is believed that the chain must have been two thousand years old. Specimens similar to it, found in Wales and now deposited in the British Museum, are supposed to have been ornaments worn by the ancient British kings.

There is a Royal Treasure, perhaps at this moment lying hid in some rocky chasms of the mountains of Wales—nothing less than the treasure of King Edward II., which he carried with him in his flight from the triumphant Queen and her paramour, and which they vainly, it would seem, after his capture, endeavored to recover.

The Wars of the Roses, with their sudden catastrophes and total reverses of fortunes, gave rise, without doubt, to many secret deposits, the clue to which was lost by the destruction of those who made them. Then came the dissolution of the monasteries, when the King's Commissioners kept a vigilant eye on all their belongings; yet many precious treasures must have been hidden away by devout brethren, who looked forward to seeing them once more devoted to the service of the sanctuary.

The civil wars, too, had their deposits, both of plunder and of secret hoards, and we may be on the trail of buried treasure in following the detours of plots and conspiracies for which secret deposits of coin may have been made, abandoned in the heat of flight or lost sight of by the violent deaths of those concerned.

How common and necessary the practise was of burying one's savings in time of panic we may learn from Mr. Pepys's "Diary", in which he says that on the alarm of the Dutch Invasion he hurried down with all his guineas to his father's house in Huntingdon, and there buried his treasure in the garden. His agonies of mind for the safety of his treasure and the trouble he had in digging it up and sifting earth from guineas, are naively told by the diarist.

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In Ireland there are numerous legends of the same sort, and there are few old ruins in and about which excavations have not been made at some time or other, in the expectation of finding hidden money; in some instances the consequence has been the destruction of the building, which has actually been undermined. About three miles south of Cork, near the village of Douglas, is a hill known as Castle Treasure, where a "crock of gold" of immense value was supposed to be concealed. Much excitement was caused some years ago, by the discovery of a rudely formed clay urn and two or three brazen implements; a circumstance which attracted for many months crowds to the spot. But, according to the popular belief, it is always a very difficult task to exhume such buried treasure, as some uncanny influence generally is experienced.

There is an old legend current in County Meath that when the Danes departed, they had large quantities of gold, still guarded by dogs and cats. There is a tradition that in a little round room in the moat of Diamos, are nine bags of gold, guarded against all comers by a black dog as large as a calf, which has a white spot on its side. Whoever, it is said, intends to get the gold must first kill the dog by stabbing it three times in the white spot.

Again, on the banks of a northern Irish river, and near a small eminence, according to a prominent writer, "is a beautiful green spot, on which two large moss-covered stones over six hundred feet apart are shown. A local legend says that two huge crocks of gold lie buried under these conspicuous landmarks, and that whenever a persistent effort has been made to dig around and beneath them, a monk has appeared in full habit, carrying a cross in his hand to warn off sacrilegious offenders."

IN FORMER times, of all the countries in the west of Europe, Ireland stood at the head of the list as regards its wealth in gold. An idea of the riches of Old Erin may be obtained from the statement that while the collection in the British Museum of prehistoric gold from England, Scotland and Wales, together amounted not long since to some thirty-odd ounces, that in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin weighed five hundred and seventy ounces. And the Academy collection contains but a very small part of the gold-finds made in Ireland, for before 1861, when a new law about treasure-trove came into effect, great numbers of gold objects are known to have been sold to the goldsmiths and melted down.

The mines of the Wicklow Hills were rich in the yellow metal; and Nennius tells us that the Irish kings "wore crowns of gold," and that "their ears were hung with pearls."

Many objects of intrinsic value, as well as priceless jewels, books and cases, shrines and carvings, seem lost to the world forever. Where is the ornate book-case (*cumhdach*) of Saint Patrick? What became of his crozier? The Irish Academy, the British Museum, antiquarians all over the world would pay for a satisfactory answer to either of these questions.

Nearly all of the antique Irish articles made in pagan times show a great mastery over the metals, both precious and otherwise; and this art was continued into Christian times. Thus, the three most remarkable, as well as the most beautiful and most elaborately ornamented objects yet recovered, were made by Christian artists. They are the famous Ardagh Chalice, the Tara Brooch and the Cross of Cong. Many other articles of precious and semi-precious metals, as yet unfound, can scarcely be inferior to the three above mentioned.

The Ardagh Chalice, which is seven inches high, and a little over nine inches in diameter at the top, was found a few years ago buried in the ground under a stone in the county of Limerick. It is elaborately ornamented with designs in metal and enamel; and, judging from its shape and from its admirable workmanship, it was probably made some short time before the tenth century.

The Tara Brooch was found in 1850 near Drogheda by a child. It is ornamented all over with amber, glass and enamel, and with the characteristic Irish filigree work in metal. Judging from its style of workmanship, it seems as if this valuable relic might have been made in the same century as was the Ardagh Chalice. Without having seen this remarkable object it would be difficult indeed to obtain any adequate idea of its extraordinary delicacy and beauty. It is perhaps the finest specimen of ancient metal-work remaining in any country.

The Cross of Cong, which is two feet six inches high, is entirely covered with elaborate ornamentation of purely Celtic design;

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and a series of inscriptions in the Irish language give its full history. Its accomplished artist, who finished his work in 1123, and who deserved to be remembered for all time, was Mailisa MacBraddan O'Hechan.

In the south of Scotland, there has long been a tradition that vast treasures are hidden away beneath the ruins of Hermitage Castle—one of the most famous of the border keeps in the days of its splendor, but as they are supposed to be "in the keeping of the Evil One," they are considered beyond redemption. At different times, various efforts have been made to dig for them, yet "somehow the elements always on such occasions contrived to produce an immense storm of thunder and lightning" and deterred the adventurers from proceeding, otherwise, it is said, the money would long ago have been found.

Scotland has numerous legends of this description, some of which have been incorporated into its popular rhymes. Thus, on a certain farm in the parish of Lesmahagow, from time immemorial, there existed a tradition that underneath a very large stone was secreted a vast treasure in the shape of "a kettleful, a bootful, and a bullhide full of gold" all of which have been designated by the peasantry in the neighborhood as Katie Nevin's Hoard.

There is a popular notion that underneath Largo Law in Fife there is a very rich mine of gold, which up to the present time has never been properly searched for. So convinced are, or were, the peasantry of the truth of this story, that whenever the wool of a sheep's side happens to be tinged with yellow, they maintain that it has acquired this color from having lain above the gold of the mine. There is also a legendary belief that there is concealed at Tamleuchar Cross, in Selkirkshire, a highly valuable treasure.

For many ages past, a pot of gold is reported to have lain at the bottom of a pool beneath a fall of the rivulet underneath Craufurdland Bridge, about three miles from Kilmarnock. The last attempt made to recover this treasure was by the Laird of Craufurdland himself, who, at the head of a party of his domestics, emptied the pool of its contents by means of damming up the water, and had heard their instruments clink on the kettle, when a voice was heard saying:

"Pow, pow!
Craufurdland Tower's in a low."

Whereupon the party left the scene, thoroughly scared. According to Dr. Chambers, "a later and well-authenticated effort to recover the treasure was interrupted by a natural occurrence in some respects similar." But legends of treasure concealed at the bottom of wells are of frequent occurrence; and the "white ladies" who dwell in the lakes, wells and seas of so many countries, are owners of vast treasures, which oftentimes cause many a hazardous enterprise.

For centuries the search for ancient treasure has been pursued in the glens and wild places of the Highlands of Scotland, and sometimes unexpected "finds" have been made. For instance, a tradition that a treasure was hidden in a glen at Inverary had long been handed down. According to the legend, it would never be found except by a stranger.

Generation after generation of children searched for it. If a badger made a hole in the hillside the children believed that the badger had the scent, and dug up his burrow; but no young or old badger ever came forth with bangles on its neck or its nose. The children watched every rabbit scrape or hen scratch to see if animal or bird had been attracted by anything shining under the sod or in the sand.

Then drainage was introduced. Formerly the glen was too wet to be cultivated, except on dry slopes where water could not gather, and a hand plow did all the necessary furrowing. But now red-tiled pipes were put down to drain off water from flatter ground, and it was possible to sow in comparatively level places.

One pretty piece of grass land under a cliff was pointed out as a good bit for plowing. From the precipice above a great rock had fallen in long past ages. This had to be removed. The man at the plowtail was a stranger, an Englishman.

He put a bag of powder under the rock to blow it up. The explosion followed, the partly splintered rock heaved and fell on its side. Underneath where it had been was a gleam of the lost treasure. There were three beautiful, heavy gold bracelets, two of which had cups at their ends. The treasure had been found, and by a "stranger" as prophesied.

The bracelets were beautifully wrought; one of them had plain ends where the wrist

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was slipped through. As for the pair with the hollow cups, an old tradition was recalled which declared that no person who had committed a fault could be forgiven unless the cups of gold at the gap in the bracelets were filled with his penitential tears. There is just room for the nose, like the wrist, to slip in between the golden ends, and it is possible to hold the cups under the two eyes.

Sometimes ignorant men who have found such bracelets have looked on the gold as mere brass.

In one case a number of bracelets found in an island of the Hebrides were used as drawer handles for an old pine chest of drawers.

A pedler came to the cottage, found that the old chest had very heavy handles, and gave fifteen shillings ($3.60) for it. He took it away and sold the old handles for twenty pounds each.

Such heavy ornaments as the bracelets might have been a burden to the Celtic beauty. For a warrior, the gold was beaten out until it was thin, for then it was more portable and easily worked. Patterns of all kinds could be punched in it, so as to give a good effect in front.

We can imagine how grand an old chief from England or Wales or Ireland looked with a shining yellow band on his conical helmet, a broad plate of gold on his right shoulder, and on his left a long yellow mantle girt in by the belt itself.

THE GOLD OF KING MIDAS

AN IMPORTANT result of archeological investigation and excavation in Greek lands is the testing of the credibility of ancient legends, and the adding of personality to mythical characters. Crœsus, King of Lydia, with whose name and person myth and fancy have long delighted to frolic, is being brought nearer to us every day by the brilliant results of the American expedition at Sardis.

And now a third person, prominent in ancient myth and fable, king of the neighboring country of Phrygia, "Midas of the Golden Touch," is likely to be revealed to us in his true character, as a report has come that a Danish expedition is about to undertake the task of excavating his capital. The ruins of his tomb have been found.

In olden times there were mines in the country, there was actually gold in the river Pactolus, which was washed from the stream by placer mining, and the valleys furnished fertile ground for farming; but, after all, the main source of revenue must have been the protective tariff. If the country then was potentially rich there is no reason to doubt the reports of the wealth of King Midas.

His tomb is elaborately and magnificently executed, and though we have no means of judging the value of his throne which he dedicated at Delphi, Herodotus calls it a most beautiful work of art, and we know that barbarians made only very costly offerings to that Greek shrine.

Croesus, to mention him again in comparison with Midas, made gifts there of an incredible number of gold and silver objects, all of which are enumerated by Herodotus.

The wealth of Midas became proverbial among the Greeks, used in reference to any exaggeration, and the name, Midas, was the slang term current in Athens for the luckiest throw at dice.

The field is large in Phrygia, and the ground has yet scarcely been scratched, so the world will await with interest the results of excavation in the valley of the Sangarius, to learn if the walled city there was really the capital of Midas, and the rock tomb his grave; to know who the Phrygians really were, and how far they came into contact with the Greeks; whether they came originally from Macedonia or early sent an offshoot to Macedonia from Asia.

Perhaps some of the gold that made Midas famous may still rest in the ruins about his tomb! These are some of the reasons which explain the importance of this site to the historian, to the linguist, to the archeologist, and even to the man in the street, who from his childhood days has been more or less familiar with the story of Midas.

One result of the expedition, it is hoped, will be to explain the real basis of the belief that Midas could change everything he touched to gold. These ancient legends are seldom found to be without substantial basis.

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TREASURES AND RICHES THAT HAVE VANISHED

THERE are fixed quantities of certain indestructible substances, such as gold, precious stones and the like, which, however they may be changed by fire or other agencies, yet for all that, can scarcely be lessened in bulk, dimension, or value. What a quantity of money, for instance, is unaccounted for! The considerable amount disinterred, bears no appreciable proportion to the probable quantity coined —say since the patriarchal times when Abraham weighed and paid down for the Cave of Machpelah in "shekels of the merchant!"

The Roman predecessors of England certainly seem to have sown their fields broadcast with the contents of their purses; but all that has been or ever will be discovered can be but a fraction of the money they circulated in Britain. And where is the rest of it?

There is the seven-branched candlestick of the Jewish Temple, which is figured on the arch of Titus as having formed part of the spoils of his triumph. It is said to have been cast over the Milvian Bridge into the waters of the Tiber. But on this, as on so many other matters, the learned and antiquarian fiercely join issue. We therefore presume not to offer the slightest humble opinion, save that if it is there, it is the duty of the municipality or some other body, to search for and recover it, in the interests of the world.

Half a century ago the Italian government offered fifty thousand dollars to any one who would rediscover the Florentine chalice. This is a goblet of green Venetian glass made in the sixteenth century for the Pope, and engraved with a picture of the Resurrection. Its manufacture is said to have occupied two years, and the secret of the glass, which was thinner than paper, is lost. The cup was stolen from the Vatican. But no one came forward to claim the offered reward, and the probabilities are that the cup has been smashed.

A similar treasure, which vanished in an equally strange manner, is a vase of Dresden china, from the famous Marsella collection. Its value is fully seventy-five thousand dollars. It bears upon it crossed arrows and a lion's head. A few years ago the vase was said to be in the north of England, and it is safe to assert that if any one rediscovers it he can command a price running well into four figures.

Probably in some lumber room in England there is an old sword, which, if the owner only knew it, is worth eight or ten thousand dollars. It was the state sword presented by the nation to Edward III., and at one time the hilt was studded with large rubies; but these disappeared long before the weapon followed them into obscurity some years ago. Any one of the British National Museums would purchase the sword for the sum mentioned, while it is not unlikely that in a public auction-room, the bidding would rise even higher.

The ancient Roman records tell us of two barges laden with golden vessels and jewels which sank off the Island of Ischia, near Naples, more than two hundred years before the Christian era. Beyond a doubt, a complete exploration of the floor of the Mediterranean would bring to light untold millions in ancient treasures.

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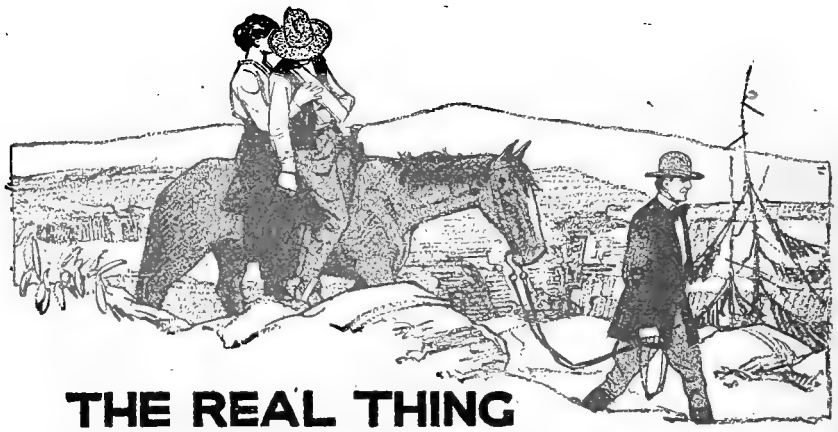

THE REAL THING

By George L. Knapp.

CHARLES SEFTON, President of the Great Basin Mining & Milling Company, was a financier by cultivation, a hand-made plutocrat. He was a pretty good job as hand-made articles go, for the G. B. M. & M. Company was one of the least of his many enterprises; merely the Western wing of his far-flung dollar line. But he had little natural aptitude for money-making, save a certain indifference to the rights of those whom he did not know, and to the sufferings which he was not required to see. This is a very present help in time of tight bargains, but taken by itself, it does not seem much of a passport to success.

The things which made Charles Sefton successful were the result of training, culture, application. He was diligent, he was earnest, and he was single-minded. He had taught himself to keep his eye firmly fixed on the main chance.

Charles Sefton was a very moral man. He never broke the law, except on the advice of a competent attorney. He believed his own fortune was a demonstration of the goodness of God. Even when most deeply engaged in business, he wore the devotional look of one in intimate communion with the Most High; and when he handed out a one-sided contract for a signature, he did it as if passing the plate for contributions in a holy cause. Why not?

What cause could be holier than the advancement of Charles Sefton?

SOME such thought may have been at the bottom of his mind as he stood in his Company's office in the little town of Basin one late October morning. His tour of inspection was finished, but he had some days to spare before it was necessary to start back East. Outside, the hills were purple and gold under the Colorado sun.

Sefton was booted and spurred for a ride. Horse and dog waited without; but his Western lawyer waited within, harping on a string that Charles Sefton found rather annoying.

"For the sake of peace," the lawyer was saying, "it is better to buy out Anderson than to fight him. He asks ten thousand dollars; probably he'll take less. If the claims are worth fighting for in the courts, they are worth buying at that price."

"Their only known value is in the veins which apex on our land," explained Sefton as one who must needs be patient with dulness.

"I know it," returned the lawyer. "Under that fool apex line of decisions, we can go in and take his claims away from him, after he's discovered and partly developed them. That ain't going to make us popular in this part of the country."

"We are not seeking popularity!"

"It's a good thing to have, sometimes," retorted the lawyer.

"A clear legal title is a better thing," snapped Sefton. "Mr. Anderson is supposed to know the law. If he fails to

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recognize its binding force he must take the consequences."

"But Anderson's moral rights—" began the lawyer.

Sefton cut him short, his voice a black frost.

"Moral rights, like other rights, are defined by the law. Mr. Anderson has nothing to sell that we can not get without buying. The suits must be pushed without compromise and without delay."

He walked out without waiting for an answer. The lawyer chewed hard on the end of a cheap, unlighted cigar and spoke softly to himself:

"Married man, jay town, small practise, nothing saved, two kids. Wonder if I'm justified in raising 'em on money as dirty as that would be?"

Charles Sefton rode over the hills under the flooding sunshine as if he had not a care in the world; though, truth to tell, this placid manner was a bit of a bluff. The lawyer had failed in his plea; but a few shafts of the argument had gone home and were rankling now beneath the calm exterior. He was only a hand-made financier, after all. There were human elements in him still, and these human elements were uneasy.

Perhaps that is why he rode toward the mine. He reached it before noon, had luncheon, examined the ore again, heard the report of the foreman, and found his moral misgivings disappear in the reassurance of material benefits. When he mounted his horse after luncheon, his mind was truly at peace, and instead of returning the way he came, he struck across the hills to where Anderson was working his two claims.

ANDERSON was driving a tunnel. Without aid he drilled the holes, fired the shots, wheeled away the broken rock. A little way from the tunnel-mouth was the shack where he slept to avoid the seven-mile trip to his home. He was not keeping union hours. His wife was handling the little farm and caring for the children, while he worked at the mine which should some day make them all rich.

Twice a week his oldest boy rode over, bringing provisions. On Saturday—and this was Saturday—the boy would come in the afternoon, and the two would ride home together on the brown mare. Monday morning they would come back in the same fashion. Anderson was a simple man. He did not believe that a man who discovered a mine, and worked so hard to develop it, could be dispossessed on a technicality.

Perhaps he was thinking of this as he loaded his round of holes. Perhaps the thought made him blunder in cutting the fuses.

From the little level space in front of the tunnel, the ground pitched sharply to the creek and the trail below. Billy Anderson, coming with the brown mare, counted the explosions as he wound along the trail. They stopped before he came to the foot of the hill. The mare knew her rights, and took her time making the steep ascent. Just as she reached the level in front of the tunnel there came another explosion. Billy slipped to the ground, wondering, and looked around. His father was not in sight.

He dropped the reins and raced for the tunnel-mouth.

"Dad!" he called.

There was no answer. He ran like a streak to the shack. It was empty. He jumped upon a rock and looked around. His father was nowhere to be seen. He darted back to the tunnel mouth.

"Dad! Oh, dad!" he shouted again; and this time there came a groan in reply.

Billy's heart seemed to stop beating at that soft, sickening sound; but he was loyal. Dad was hurt, somehow, and he must go in and help. He got a candle, lighted it with a hand that shook so it nearly put out the match, and began his adventure into the tunnel. The narrow passage was thick with stifling fumes. Never had it seemed half so long. He went forward, fearful but resolute. Almost at the end he came upon his father.

JARED ANDERSON was lying on his back, eyes closed, head turned on one shoulder, and both arms flung wide. One of those arms, Billy noted with curdling horror, lacked a hand. There was a cut on the forehead, but it did not look deep. Billy put his hand on his father's chest. The heart was beating. Then he set down his candle, and tried to lift the big man. As he did so, Jared groaned.

"Oh, dad! Dad! Are you killed?" cried Billy.

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Jared did not answer, but his arms moved restlessly, and Billy noted a spurting stream from the left wrist. Mastering his horror, the boy jerked the handkerchief from his throat, and knotted it tightly about the forearm. He did not know how to make a tourniquet, but the blood-vessels were somewhat crushed together by the explosion, and for the time the awkward bandage was enough. Jared opened his eyes.

"Water!" he groaned. Billy ran for the bucket, and Jared drank long and greedily. "Tha's better," he declared, slurring his words like a drunken man.

"Can you walk, dad?" queried Billy, valorous through his tears.

Jared felt himself all over with his remaining hand before replying.

"I'll try," he said feebly. " 'N' if I can't —walk—I'll crawl!"

Now half upright, leaning on his son; now on three legs like a crippled dog, and still leaning on his son, Jared negotiated the short length of the tunnel. The fresh air revived him. He rested a few minutes, and so did Billy—it was heavy work for a ten-year-old—and then they continued the crawl to the shack. It took several trials before he could get into his bunk.

"Get y'r mother!" he commanded. "I'm —all in. Ge' y'r—mother!"

His voice trailed off into silence. He had fainted.

Billy wrapped his father in the blankets, and ran to the brown mare. He scrambled onto her back, shrieked an order, and the two were off on their seven-mile race for help. And those were mountain miles.

CHARLES SEFTON came around the shoulder of the mountain in time to see Billy riding recklessly across the little flat far below; but the sight meant nothing to him. He rode on down the path till he came out on the little plateau in front of the tunnel. No one was in sight, and Charles Sefton was slightly relieved at that fact. Suddenly his horse shied, snorting violently. Charles Sefton looked down and saw a pool of blood. It marked the spot where Jared had rested before trying to get to the bunkhouse.

For a moment, Charles Sefton felt sick. Then, because after all he had almost as good stuff in him as the boy Billy, he dismounted. The dog barked from the door of the shack, and then Sefton saw that a trail of blood led from the tunnel mouth to where the dog was standing. His spine felt chilly, but he tied his horse to a little piñon tree, and went to the shack.

At first, he saw only the little camp stove, the litter of untidy cooking, and a huddled mass on the bunk. Then the mass heaved restlessly, and Charles Sefton saw a pale, battered face, framed in a tangle of hair and beard, and the bloody stump of an arm waving irresolutely, with a thin red jet spurting from the end of it.

"What's the matter?" demanded Sefton.

"Water!" moaned Anderson.

Sefton got a dipper of water. Awkwardly, and shuddering at the touch of the blood, Sefton slipped his arm under the wounded man's head. Anderson drank greedily.

"What's the matter?" repeated Sefton.

"Missed shot." The words came slurringly.

"Are you Anderson?"

"Yes," and the man shivered. "Cold."

For a moment Sefton wondered if the man were light-headed; then he caught sight once more of the thin red jet. The bed was soaked. The man must be bleeding to death.

He reached over and tried to draw the knot tighter. The effort was futile. Anderson spoke.

"Twist it," he commanded. Sefton stared helplessly. "Twist it," repeated Anderson. "Stick."

By some lucky chance, Sefton grasped the meaning. He picked up a stick, thrust it under the handkerchief, twisted it till the spurting stopped, and then, after much cogitation, tied the stick in place with his own handkerchief.

"Right," said Anderson.

"Now I'll go for a doctor," said Sefton.

Anderson shook his head.

"But you must have help!" insisted Sefton.

"Boy—gone—help——" explained Anderson. He shivered again.

SEFTON turned to the little camp-stove and began starting a fire. He shuddered with disgust at the blood on his hands, but kept at work. Spying a coffeepot, he set it on the flames, and when the muddy mixture inside was hot, he poured a cupful down the thirsty throat of the wounded man.

"That's better," said Jared Anderson;

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and this time he spoke without slurring the words. "Jennie—m' wife—she'll be here—quick. Oh, Lord!"

"Are you in pain?" asked Sefton.

"Not much," was the reply. "But this—this fixes it."

"Fixes what?" asked Sefton in genuine puzzlement.

"Everything," came the reply from the bunk after a pause. "Hand gone. Mine going. Mine got th' hand—'n' th' Company'll get the mine!"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Sefton, and the lawyer back at Basin would have given a month's income for a sight of the financier's hurt, shocked look.

" 'Fraid so," spoke Anderson. "Boys tol' me so. Didn't believe 'em, but—guess it's right. Can't fight—now."

"Surely the Company won't bother you till you're well," exclaimed Sefton. "I——"

Anderson spoke on, unheeding.

"Thought—I knew—what—hard luck was," he said brokenly. "Mistake. That was—just—make b'lieve. This—is the real thing."

Sefton adjusted the blankets. He thought the wounded man's remark might have more than one application; but he could think of no reply.

"Wonder if Billy got throwed?" exclaimed Anderson suddenly.

"Oh, no!" returned Sefton confidently.

"Can't have him hurt—now," said Anderson. "Hand gone—mine gone—mebbe I'm goin' too. Jennie's got to have—some one."

"You're not going to die," said Sefton encouragingly.

Anderson regarded him carefully with one eye—the other was closed by the swelling.

"You're good to me," he announced.

Sefton felt uncomfortable. He gave the man another hot drink.

"Cuss—Comp'ny! Real—thing!" Anderson muttered sleepily, and his eyes closed.

Through the century-long minutes, Sefton fidgeted; looking at the man, at his own hands, at the sun low down in the western sky, and wondered when help would come. Suddenly Anderson opened his eyes.

"They're coming!" he declared.

Sefton heard a clatter. Then a horse's head topped the rise, and a woman, riding astride, came toward the shack as fast as the brown mare could gallop. She pulled up sharply, sprang off, and ran into the shack.

"JARED!" she cried.

The man gripped her with his one remaining hand.

"It's got me, Jennie. The real thing—this time. You'll get all bloody!"

The woman gave her husband one tense kiss, and then went over him with capable hands. The boy came up, riding bareback on a colt. Mrs. Anderson finished her examination, and stood with clenched hands, thinking.

"I don't think he's much hurt, aside from that arm," volunteered Sefton at length.

"No," returned the woman. "Unless that eye—or he's hurt inside. We've got to get him to Glenwood."

"Where's the wagon?" queried Sefton.

"Wagon?" the woman returned in amazement. "You can't get near here with a wagon. I've got to take him on horseback."

"On horseback? To Basin?"

"To Placer," corrected the woman. "We can catch Number Three there—we got to catch it. Then Glenwood, and a doctor."

"But the man can't ride!" cried Sefton.

"He'll die if he stays here. I've got to ride behind him—and hold him," she announced with grim decision, and turned to the bunk. "Honey, can't you make it if I hold you?"

"Got to!" the man smiled wanly.

"Bring Nell close," commanded the mother. "And draw her cinch tight. You'll have to lead her. I can't do anything but hold your pa."

"If you are going to try this, take my horse and I will lead him," Sefton struck in.

Sefton and the wife brought out the wounded man between them, and got him into the saddle. Mrs. Anderson mounted behind, sitting astride. Then putting one strong arm around her husband, she took a firm grip with the other hand on his handless wrist, Sefton grasped the reins, and the procession started.

IT was nine miles to Placer. The gold of the evening faded into dusk, and the dusk to darkness. The moon came up, laggardly. Sefton stumbled ahead, holding the reins. Half the time, he

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seemed to be walking in a dream, and the other half—it was his previous life that was the dream, a dream filled with unreal shadows. Only this afternoon was true and genuine—the real thing.

They reached Placer in time to flag Number Three. Strong hands, better used to such work than Sefton's, carried the husband aboard. Mrs. Anderson followed, watchful, motherly, capable. Sefton, unobserved, managed to slip a gold piece to the conductor, who nodded understanding. The train pulled out, and the financier turned to the waiting station agent.

"I want to send some telegrams," he said, and his shoulders straightened.

Inside, Sefton wrote rapidly and thrust the yellow slips through the window. The agent began to count the words mechanically, then stopped counting to read them. The one to the Glenwood Hospital did not greatly surprise him; but he rubbed his eyes as he read the longer message, and stared at the signature:

JARED ANDERSON, ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL, GLENWOOD:

Will give you $10,000 (ten thousand dollars) cash, and the same amount common stock Great Basin Company for your claims, Jennie and Billy Boy. Wire acceptance, collect Company office, Basin. CHARLES SEFTON.

The agent thrust his hand through the window.

"Shake, partner," he said. "You're all right! You—you're the real thing."

"Don't!" said Charles Sefton, while a queer, grateful glow diffused itself over his being. "That phrase makes me nervous!"

The Marrow-Bone 6y S·B·H Hurst

Author of "The Third Chance," "A Gilded Mirage," etc.

YOU are widely scattered. I have written to you all, but there came no answer to my letters: at the Club of Western India, in Poona, and in other places, those letters must be waiting for you—you who are likely to remain on the far edges of the World until you drop off into that deeper time, where is forgetfulness.

So I have taken this method of trying to reach you; not only because the old ear desires the voices of days dead, but also, to redeem the promise I made to you concerning certain strange bets you made among yourselves—the promise being that I would some day discover the unromantic truth, about which you made such wild guesses. In discovery I have proven myself to be a weak philosopher, for now I know that Truth and Romance are twins.

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You will remember that dinner on the *Minto*, in the harbor of Port Blair, Andaman Islands, in 1893. We had gathered from the distant places, and we were all old friends—having called each other evil names prior even to Conway days. You will remember how Headlam—I heard from him last just before the Boxer business—grew melancholy over his Marsala, after his manner; how he voiced his unhappiness regarding the fate of two who had recently bequeathed the convict settlement a mystery; how he offered to bet vast sums that they had perished wetly and miserably; and how many of you took the bet—logic having left us.

More bets were made upon the same matter. How weird they seem in the calm of later years!

Rutherford—what ever did become of Rutherford?—offered more money than he had ever possessed, or was ever likely to possess, that the two who had eluded both the land guards and ourselves had become sacrifices to some unknown god of the Andamanese. Rutherford was always a trifle weak regarding religions. Hunter laid his money on the cannibalistic efforts of the, then, rather mythical tribes of the unexplored parts of the Islands. And Marshall offered a hundred dibs to six—a ratio he swore was mathematically exact—that—but Marshall is not a man who can be quoted in this place.

The evening overflowed into morning whilst we argued. You mocked me when I talked against you all, so that I slept upon the pillow of derision. But listen to the tale; and if at the end I still hold your interest, be assured that the reason for my going no further is because the long arm of the British Government takes no heed of time.

NOW, Bill Driver, as you all know, was a private in a certain Lancashire regiment, stationed at Calcutta. He weighed about a hundred and ninety in condition; his neck was bull-like and his height was five feet, six.

The marrow-bone of a man's life is the right woman. I sincerely trust that you have found this out for yourselves; but if you have not, pray hard to the god who deals that you may find her and achieve, and that happiness which makes the nether spirits jealous be yours.

And Bill Driver did this—but it was by favor of the god of the chances and not through any process of prayer. The shadows had fallen and the bats were flying low, whilst Calcutta droned to the fulness of its night-noise, and the smoke of wood-fires and cooking-pots was as incense to the higher devotion.

Her name was Annie Hall, and she was the daughter of a sergeant.

They stood outside her father's quarters, and love wove melodies for them out of the ancestral memories we call the subconscious mind—a musty term which fails to limn the marvel of the abyss it signifies.

"Why didn't you tell me abart it afore, Bill?"

Bill had tried to tell her about it before, many times, but the fate controlling the silent dispositions had been on duty at his birth, so that he was a person to whom speech came with effort; and now, feeling the hand that must win in his, he was most properly abashed, and mumbled something about being "only a private."

"Why—you'll be regimental sergeant-major in no time, Bill; but you must read books and get to know things."

At this point the record goes beyond the deciphering of mere language; but there are indications that Bill, having found Paradise, would have lingered there for eternity. She seems, however, to have impressed upon him the importance of the fact that her father would be home in an hour, at which time Bill might return, to explain the condition of his heart to the older man—which explanation would "make it proper."

So she dismissed him with the queenly authority given only to the right woman—repeating somewhat unnecessarily the permission to return in an hour, and adding a further injunction concerning books.

Borne upon the lilt of the mingling love-dreams of the ages, to which clung the pulsing one of his own, Bill Driver sought the regimental library, walking in the shadows and away from the canteen and the surf-like voices of his friends; for he—the fighting private of gorilla-like growth—craved soft music and not horse-play.

Now, books had not hitherto warped the man's mind any too greatly, and he found the library empty of humans who might have assisted, when he was confronted with a bewildering mass of the toil-tapestries of the pen. Hesitating, there came to him the

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memory of a frontier mêlée, when, encircled by a crowd of evilly grinning faces, and wondering which to kill first, he had taken the nearest. He used that system again. On the table lay an open book.

That book should not have been there, a wise Government having decreed that it was not fit food for the mind of the fighting man. But some reader of illicit literature had likely thrown it down before hurrying to the canteen—for that book affects men strangely. Some are made sick by it, as some are made sick by a first-witnessed surgical operation; and these feel the need of stimulants. To others it is like the hand of a diseased devil plucking at the soul of pride and honor; and these——

Bill Driver opened the book and read of the horrors done to gentle English women and children by the natives during the Mutiny. And to his wide chest there came a tenseness, and his sight of things was narrowed. He read further, and the face of every outraged and tortured woman became the face of his Annie.

There was a fulness about his throat. He laid the book down very gently. He saw the little babies quite distinctly—he fancied he could hear their cries; and he could see their mothers; and he saw——

His hands curved into clutching. Leering faces laughed at him—faces that eluded him, as they had eluded the avenging British guns. There were so many of those faces!

He walked around the table, dimly wondering what a table was. He was no longer Bill Driver of the nineteenth century. Training and knowledge had passed from him.

He tiptoed stealthily from the room. He was no longer Private William Driver. He was a far more terrible fighting man than even Driver had been; he was a seething congeries of the emotions of certain others, whose blood ran in his veins, whose clothing was their own matted hair, and whose dwelling-places were caves.

I have never been able to understand why, or how, he sought his rifle, knowing the awful clutch of those two great hands of his, and the instinct which must have been prompting him to use them.

He crouched and swayed as he walked, his rifle grasped like a club, the ancient protective instinct of the male drawing him. In him rose the memory of a fire, beside which his mate was lying. He did not think in words but in pictures; and his feelings urged and tormented him—he sought the feel of a dead something to put an end to that torment.

His toes knew the prehensile tingle, and gripped through his shoes for the earth-touch. He sniffed appreciatively at the picture of his own cave, his own fire and his own woman; but between him and comfort lay that other picture—something alive that should be dead.

There are several devils who rule the coincidences, and the strongest of these is very cruel. This one had apparently noticed Bill Driver; for as that seething atavism reached the quarters of Annie's father a native crossed the parade-ground. He was a very ordinary native.

The sight of the man brought momentary thought to the man in whom ancestry had awakened so vividly; and with thought came a dizzy groping for the crime the native had committed. Ah, he had outraged Annie Hall. Bill saw him doing this, and, his brain reeling into the abyss of the past, he broke into two distinct personalities, one of which called to the other across a chasm of half a million years.

So Bill Driver, third-class shot, obeyed the call. Automatically he ceased to hold his rifle as if it were a club; and his shooting on this occasion was excellent. Upon the noise current of the Indian night the report broke and shivered in diminishing echoes. Like a mother to the cry of the child she can not see, yet knows for her own, came Annie, running. And, the mandate of the past obeyed, Bill no longer glared through a red haze.

"I done it," he murmured wonderingly.

Annie's arms closed 'round him, as if she would shield him from all the world.

There was the sound of many voices with the patter of feet bewildered.

"Wot for, Bill—why?"

Bill Driver would never know the real reason for his killing the native, but he made the only explanation possible to him—

"I—read—the book."

"Wot book? Hurry, the whole regiment's coming."

"Abart wot the niggers did to the women in the Mutiny."

"Oh, Bill," she wailed, "you shouldn't have. Father says——"

Upon Bill Driver breathed that fair spirit

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who teaches men to strive for the peace of another's soul at the expense of their own.

"Quick—your father don't know?"

"Know?"

"Abart you and me?"

"No—he ain't come 'ome off duty yet."

"He'll be 'ere in a minute—'ear 'em runnin'. Listen—" Bill's tone was grim with determination—"there's no need for you to be mixed up in this. Nobody knows we was fond of each other. Don't tell nobody."

"But I must. I want to 'elp you, Bill. You done it 'cos you was thinkin' of me."

"If it's hanging, you carn't 'elp; if it ain't, you may. It won't 'elp any for you to tell."

"But it will help, Bill."

"If you tell, I'll say it ain't true. Promise you won't say nothing. A decent girl like you carn't afford to be mixed in. Promise."

"But——"

"No 'buts'—promise. If you don't, I'll say I done it for fun. If you tell we was sweet on each other, I'll say nothin' abart the book; then they'll 'ang me."

"I—I promise, Bill."

There is a certain kiss.

"You see it's best."

"Yes," sobbed Annie Hall; and she saw farther than he did; and like so many women to whom vision has been granted she wondered how she saw so clearly, even as she would come to doubt the truth of the vision.

"Quick—fall away—they're coming."

She was gone, and fifty men panted around Bill Driver.

"Yes, sergeant, I done it."

DURING the weeks that followed, Annie Hall lived with the terrors, and slept with the dream of a hell wherein Bill Driver writhed. About this deep pit of emotional inferno she hovered, even when she prayed for the miracle to be accomplished that she might some day feel the thrill of Bill Driver's baby in her arms—however long that joy might be deferred.

"Don't let 'im be hanged—don't let him be 'ung. Oh, Gawd, I love 'im so. Make them give 'im time, an' I'll wait for him. Oh, Gawd, I'll wait."

But these were the emotions of her privacy. With that strange strength that only a woman can find in time of stress, she fought and won to outward calm. She had promised to keep their love unknown, but I think that her vision had the greater hold. For surely they would not hang him—they would not hang him. Therefore there would come a chance to help him; and if her love for him were unknown she would not be suspected and thwarted in her effort. This, I believe, was the gist of her anchor in that deep sea we call silence; yet, withal, her pillow knew that the cable holding her to that anchor was but a frail thread; besides, to tempt her to slip from her holding ground was the notion that her telling might win pity for him.

And when the law of the civilian played its cruel farce of life or death, she forced herself to stay away from the court-room—until the case was given to the jury, when she could not longer stay away. She had not seen her man since the evening of the shooting. She sat shivering in the heat. The court was crowded. The swish of the punkas mingled oddly with the subdued voices. The crowd was strongly pro-Driver—nine-tenths of it were men of his regiment. Yet, somehow, the waiting reminded Annie of a theater audience waiting for the curtain to rise.

Why were they so long about bringing in the verdict? They would bring him back from his cell when the jury had decided. Could she keep from crying out and running to him? They were coming!

Bill Driver glanced quickly around, but in the crowd his woman's eyes were hidden from him. He squared his shoulders and looked resolutely at the Judge. Annie's hands were clutching at her breast. I have often wondered why a woman does that at such times.

"We, the jury, find the prisoner guilty; but recommend him to mercy."

It occurred to Bill that he had never claimed to be innocent; and then there came to him the memory of a friend who was an entertaining drunkard, on whose silence the canteen would hang till some word or act of his gave it the cue to laugh.

The Judge was hesitating, and his hand fumbled with the black cap, just as Bill's bibulous friend would play with his glass. The horrible silence was but a pause in canteen hilarity. The Judge was drunk, the jury was drunk—Bill Driver was the only sober man in a medley of specters, who were all drunk.

Presently they would laugh—when the old man ceased to play with that fool cap, and opened his mouth.

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"You have been tried by a jury of twelve of your fellow countrymen, and you have been found guilty of the most heinous crime of murder."

The canteen picture faded from Bill's mind; the terrible silence had stripped his soul, and he knew the helplessness of a soul so stripped.

"This Court has had before it at other times the consequences of the reading of the book you read, William Driver; but the others who acted as you acted had the excuse of a woman they loved—a wife or sweetheart. You have no such excuse."

The Judge hesitated again. Then he pushed the black cap aside.

"Nevertheless, this Court is inclined to mercy in your case. You will be sent to the Andaman Islands, and there you will remain during the term of the Queen's pleasure. You will be the only white convict among many thousands; and may you meditate on your crime to your lasting benefit!"

THEY took him down to the Hastings Ghaut, and there aboard the *Shahjehan;* and the men of his regiment were given certain duties, so that they could not bid him good-by, or attempt another thing, which would have been foolish. But Bill Driver, staring disconsolately at the Arab dhows as the steamer left the wharf, never noticed their absence. He wanted Annie Hall, and she had made no sign, nor sent any word.

In the 'tween decks were a hundred and twenty native convicts. These were shackled, while Bill was allowed the freedom of a certain part of the upper deck, with No. 3 hatch as a sleeping-place. So he leaned on the rail, gripped in the invisible hell of circumstance; and as the *Shahjehan* passed Garden Reach, the pain of it found words for him.

"Let me go," he groaned. "I ain't nothing to nobody. Gawd, let me go!"

And so he went; and as the current of the muddy river and the engines of the steamer bore him farther and farther away from all the Universe held dear—whilst the voracious bramley kites shrieked a certain mockery, and the green on the banks pulsed in the heat—the agony of the separation became such that he almost jumped overboard.

It is one thing to leave a love, to sail away, promising to return—it is not any too easy to do this when a free man and in control of one's destiny. But when the human soul is *compelled* to leave its other soul—with never the surety, or even the hope, of seeing that other soul again—but the agony goes beyond the telling. Surgery has been made painless, but it seems that the Infinite holds no anesthetic for the greater agony. Besides, we who stand thanking God upon the high places have never been convicts, and can not understand. There are so many things we can not understand. Looking back, I can not understand how the web of the things that happened succeeded in keeping me out of jail.

A few days later, as the siren of the *Shahjehan* shrieked her advent, Bill Driver looked upon the harbor of Port Blair, wakening in the early morning to the coming of the mail. The mists were weaving fancies on the water, and the rising sun made a diamond of the settlement—a diamond with a large flaw in it, though in some ways the most humane penal settlement in the world.

To the left of the bungalows of the Chief Commissioner and other officials rose the barrack-like jail, that seemed to leer cynically at the beauty around it. Still farther to the left, across a narrow passage of the bluest water imaginable, was the women's jail. Away to the right of the officers' quarters was a partly cleared hill, on which were a few huts, at which Bill Driver wondered.

A launch was towing off a huge lighter for the newly arrived convicts; whilst another was coming to take the cargo. Bill Driver crossed the deck and saw the viper jail looming through the mist, up an estuary made by more islands, primeval in the luxuriance of their vegetal growth. Bonitas were chasing flying-fish, while half a dozen Andamanese — tiny negroid gentlemen, clothed with due regard to the climate in pieces of string and clay pipes—fished impartially for either from a sort of prehistoric canoe. The sun cleared the trees and drenched the water.

There came men for Bill Driver; and he was told that he would not be required to associate with the native convicts; that he would be allowed to wear an ordinary white duck suit and live alone in a little hut on Hope Island. And his duty would be that of distributing the milk—rowing from island to island in an ungainly boat with high sides.

It would have been far easier for him if the work had been harder and taken up

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more time; but the greater part of the day, and all the night, was his. He was barred from all association with white men as well as from the native prisoners, and the Sikh guards pretended not to see him. One day and one night became a torturing repetition of another; and to add to the terrible loneliness was the *strain*—the strain on two souls separated who should be together, which may be crudely described but never explained.

During the first year he received a few letters from his old comrades—beginning generally with "buck up, old top," and ending with supposedly humorous account of amorous adventure. The amateur doctor, of whatever species, is dangerously apt to make his patient worse.

Then the letters ceased.

The man who wrote about "the bitterness of death" lacked experience. Death tastes sweet—it is when they forget to put flowers on the grave that the corpse finds the flavor has changed.

The rust of loneliness corroded. There had been no word from Annie Hall. Yet—although Bill's soul had grown hard—when he made his wood-fire at night to cook his supper, when the bats flew and the shadows softened all things, her face came into the smoke of that fire—for it is at evening that a man needs her the most; and he could not feel that the memory was mocking him, as the lights of the *Minto* and *Shahjehan* seemed to mock him, although two years went by and still she sent no word. He could only love her, for she was the right woman, and when once a man has met that angel there can be only love between them. And therein lay the greater hurt for Bill Driver.

They gave a ball on the *Minto* one night, and the music coming to the man over the water told him very clearly that death was preferable to such a life; and the thought showed him the way of release.

ON THE Chief Commissioner's private wharf—Bill's first call when delivering the morning milk—was always stationed a certain Sikh guard, whom he had come to hate for no particular reason. He would kill that guard, and be hanged for it. Through the remainder of the night he dwelt pleasurably on the final gasp of that Sikh, but more pleasurably on the ending of loneliness. In the early morning he rowed the heavy milk-boat toward the private wharf, and felt that the rowing was good.

The beauty of a Port Blair dawn would hardly have enthralled Bill Driver at any time. The mist-wraiths on the water, for instance, were only an outward manifestation of chilliness; the awakening of everything was only the prelude to another horrible day, and the milk-boat was a disgusting craft to row. But here was a morning when such things were forgotten.

There was a Sikh guard with a mocking sneer, with whom Bill Driver had a dealing. There was an unspoken difference between them, which would soon be adjusted; and the final adjustment would be a rope round Driver's neck. No—it would be an end to his loneliness, and to achieve that end any method was legitimate.

"It will be a whole lot nicer down in 'ell with a lot of lively devils than it is on these 'ere blawsted hi'lands," was the burden of his thought as he rowed across the harbor. And the thought took the form of a song that inspired him, as do all battle chants, by hiding the moral sense in a medley of music-born emotions.

He made the milk-boat fast to the Chief Commissioner's landing; he took his milk-cans and passed the tall Sikh, to whom all convicts were as last year's dead flies. He set down the cans.

"I'll 'ave to take the blighter in the rear," he cogitated, "not becos he 'as a gun, an' I honly 'ave me 'ands, but because I want to get a proper hold, and do the job right afore 'e can 'oller."

There was a high box-hedge, on one side of which was a bed of English flowers which the Chief Commissioner himself cultivated, and of which he was vastly proud; on the other was a graveled path, where stood the Sikh, thinking fondly of his morning curry and rice.

Very stealthily Bill Driver passed behind the hedge. He went a few steps and hesitated, puzzled. Something was troubling him; he felt that he could not go on. What was it? He certainly was not afraid. He wanted to kill and be killed for the killing, but between him and his desire was growing the picture of the tiny Lancashire cottage where he had been born. He wondered; then he understood. He was trampling a bed of English wallflowers, and the scent of them was rising in protest.

And Annie Hall found him there—with

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his face pressed among the flowers, sobbing as a tired child sobs just before sleep takes it.

Just as there are waves of light that vibrate too rapidly for the eye to note them, so are there phases of human emotion that go beyond the realization of the individuals they come to, and only remain in memory as a sort of joyful haze. So it was to the two among the Chief Commissioner's precious wallflowers. The pain of their wide separation became the pleasure of a very close embrace; and as the girl gasped from the pressure of it, it occurred to Bill Driver that the fate in control had worked a miracle for his benefit, so that he voiced his wonder.

" 'Ow did you do it, lass? 'Ow did yer get 'ere?"

"Hug me a little looser, Bill, and I'll tell you abart it."

Bill having complied with this very unreasonable request, she went on:

"Oh, Bill, it were terrible. I said nothing, but it were awful hard to keep my mouth shut. I were fair crazy, but I prayed an' I prayed. I were at the trial, Bill, when they said you was guilty, and I thought I would go mad, keepin' myself from 'ollerin' out and runnin' to yer, as you stood up so straight and looked so fine, Bill."

Short interval for refreshments — prolonged by request of parties being refreshed.

"Then they didn't 'ang yer, Bill; and I knowed it would come out all right, though I worrited, Bill. Then I prayed and prayed —and never said a word, like you told me, Bill; and when the regiment were ordered home I worrited more. But I kept on praying, Bill; and Gawd 'eared—I know He heared, Bill, 'cos a lady friend of the Colonel's wife took a hintrest in me—she never could abide them black ayahs—and asked for me to be her maid. Father wanted me to go home with him and the regiment—'e 'as a bit put by, but I went as her maid. And then she came down here on a visit to the Chief Commissioner, her brother, and of course I come with her. I'd 'ave got 'ere some way, anyway, Bill, but I were fair bursting with joy when I knowed she were coming here. And—that's all, Bill. But wot a mess we're making of these 'ere flowers."

Then the core of any joy, which is always sorrow, became visible to Bill Driver. His knowledge of the Andaman Islands; the iron rules; its silent but thorough system of guarding, all these——

"But, lass, there ain't nothing you can do," he said gloomily. "You don't——"

She laughed.

"Do — when I've had all this time to think, and the lady telling me things. Why, Bill, don't you see them huts on the hill? We——"

"What—what are you doing here?"

The unseen pitfalls along the path of happiness are discovered suddenly as befits them. The Chief Commissioner had come out for his early morning stroll, and also to inspect his precious flowers; he had found his sister's maid in the arms of a convict, and—which was the greater crime—the two were sprawling—the word is his, for he told me about it ten years afterward—among his dearly beloved plants.

He stood looking at them, leaning slightly forward, his trembling hands on his supporting cane, and he trembled more from indignation than from age, while he wagged his white head at them with a fierceness most appalling.

"What are you doing here, spoiling my flowers?"

Bill Driver scrambled to his feet, came to attention and saluted. Annie Hall tried, womanlike, to straighten out the flowers. Neither felt able to answer.

The Chief Commissioner repeated the question. Then he sent the now awakened Sikh guard upon a wholly mythical errand, calculated to keep him occupied for fully fifteen minutes.

"What were you—what are you doing here—spoiling my flowers?"

"I were telling him abart them 'uts on the hill, sir," said Annie desperately.

"Huts—what about the huts?"

Annie pointed—rather inelegantly, I fear —to the partially cleared hill, on which were a few huts. She was also crying, but the Chief Commissioner could not avoid noticing that she was an exceptionally pretty girl.

"What about the huts?"

"Why, sir—" taking courage, for she had felt his unexpressed admiration—"why, sir, I were telling Bill abart us going to live there, sir."

The huts on the hill were the manifestation of good conduct rewarded. Convicts—native convicts—who had behaved themselves for perhaps twenty years were allowed to marry women convicts who had done likewise. Such were given a small plot to cultivate, with the hut to live in.

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Except that they could not leave the islands, they were free.

The intent of Annie's remark was obvious enough. But she had not been thirty hours at the Andamans, and Driver's opportunities for social intercourse were nil. Therefore, they must have been lovers before the man was convicted. The situation might be worthy of drastic action and certain punishment; but the Chief Commissioner closed his eyes to the rule of things for a moment to marvel at the mystery and wonder of a woman's love, the pain of their separation, and the yearning drawing them together!

"Tell me all about it," he said very gently. "Stand easy, Driver."

And Annie told him, and the tale lost nothing by her telling. She began at the night when the kindly spirits had taught them the taste of the first kiss; and she spoke of her lover as one might speak of a child that had merely erred. " 'Cos he read that 'orrid book, sir." And she told of the waiting for her chance to go to him.

"So, please, sir, let us have one of them huts on the hill, sir, and we'll promise to be awful good, an' do as we're told, and not run away, sir. We only want each other, sir—maybe you know yourself how that feels?"

The sun was rising over the wooded islands, and the harbor was beginning to sparkle as its mist-blanket lifted.

"I—I understand," said the Chief Commissioner.

"And we're terrible sorry abart them flowers, sir."

"The flowers? Oh, yes—but don't bother about them; they'll grow again, I dare say."

Then the old man fell silent.

He was silent for some time, and the lovers, thinking he was passing judgment, waited apprehensively. But his mind was very far from the Andaman Islands.

Presently he looked at the two who stood before him. He looked at them thoughtfully, till he observed that Annie's small hand was trembling in Bill Driver's large one; then he returned again to his dream. Through the shadiness of an old English garden he tried to walk in memory; and in that memory he sought a hand that once had trembled lovingly in his. He lifted his eyes, and saw through a gap in the hedge a certain moving color floating lazily from the jack-staff of the *Minto*.

" 'Thy duty,' what is duty?" he murmured.

Annie snatched her hand from Bill's and sprang before the old gentleman, her emotions shaking her.

"Don't—don't, sir! Think wot it means to us, sir."

"It isn't that, my child. If I could, I would, but there are rules which I must obey."

"But, sir," she wailed, "we carn't stay away from each other any more. Tell the gentleman, Bill."

But Bill was more than ever tongue-tied.

"Child, can not you see?"

"No, sir."

She sprang forward and gripped his arms convulsively, and the Chief Commissioner made no effort to shake her off.

"Can not you see that there are many things I must do that I don't like to do?"

"Yes, sir, but just this once, sir. Do it this once, sir."

"It hurts me to refuse you." The old man was very much upset. "But—sometimes I have to sentence people to be hanged. That hurts me, too, but I must do it—the Indian Penal Code is very strict."

"But, sir——".

"I know—I know how hard it is, but it's just as hard for me. I must obey the rules. I had to have a poor fellow, a native, hanged the other day. He had only struck an officer, but the law says one doing that, if here on sentence, must hang. I didn't like to do it, but I had to. I will have to send you away, child; but I promise you that we will be as good to your sweetheart as we can, and——"

"But them huts, sir?"

"For convicts only—convicts who——"

Suddenly the god of notions flashed an idea to Annie Hall. She released her grip of the old man's arms, and looked at him steadily. Her voice ceased to be tremulous and became tense.

"That native convict you 'anged, sir?"

"Yes?"

"He 'it an orficer?"

"Yes—and because he was a convict I had to have him hanged."

"Suppose he hadn't been a convict, sir—suppose 'e 'ad been a free person?"

"Oh—I would have had to have given him five to twenty years, to preserve discipline, you see."

"Is that the lawr, sir?"

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"Yes, with regard to those not here on sentence. We must——"

ANNIE HALL sprang at him like a wild thing. The blow she aimed with all the strength of her young arm did not properly reach its mark. Nevertheless the Chief Commissioner staggered, as Bill Driver dragged her away, screaming:

"You and your lawr—a free person 'itting the likes of you gets twenty years. Now—give me life, so as I can be 'ere with Bill."

Then she drowned the logic of the woman in a woman's tears.

Vastly disturbed as he must have been, there was no resentment in the old man's voice.

"I can not take official cognizance of your action, an action for which you are hardly responsible. You will return to Calcutta tomorrow. Say good-by to each other."

Then he turned away and left them.

"Go," whispered Bill Driver. "Go, lass, and forget abart me."

But Annie Hall kissed him rapturously.

"Don't be mawky, Bill. I'm only just beginning to take care of you."

Then she ran into the house.

We drink in the beauty of music and the magic of a woman's voice raised in song; then we pass out into the wet and chill of the street.

Bill watched Annie go with the dull wonderment of the slow thinker, then it occurred to him that there was more milk to be delivered.

He rowed the clumsy milk-boat, sitting in a mental void where all that made him aware of his sentiency was the regular, croaking laughter of certain devils who also inhabited that void. When he stopped rowing to curse those devils they stopped laughing at him; so that he presently discovered that the imagined laughter was the grind of his oars.

He sought the shade of his hut—dragging himself in there like an animal that, craving a place to die, is glad to find it.

By noon a heavy bank of clouds had formed in the southwest, and the air hung like the atmosphere of a vapor bath, impregnated with spices. It was the break of the southwest monsoon, and, as usual, it would break with a gale of wind and rain. So the afternoon passed, heavy with the storm that was about to be born.

At dusk Bill lit his fire and mechanically cooked and ate his supper. The night closed with the heavy blanketing clouds blotting the stars. Through the gloom showed the riding-lights of the *Minto* and *Shahjehan*, with the house-lights of the settlement. Everything was very still. Then a single growl of thunder broke raucously into the quiet, and a moment later another barked back at it. In the ensuing silence, Driver, standing apathetically on the decaying little wharf of his island, heard oars rowed unskilfully.

Well, there was nothing unusual about a boat in Port Blair harbor. It was one of those guard boats, fooling around. He turned to go back to his hut, when to his slow mind it percolated that the oar-sound was very different from that made by a trained crew. The noise indicated a rather unhappy combination of "crab-catching," "gull-catching" and splashes that were neither one nor the other. Vaguely Bill sensed that there were but two oars engaged in the weird operation. Then it must be a small boat. But what small boats were there, that should be around lonely Hope Island at such a time, with a storm breaking?

And the boat was nearing the wharf. That is, if it was nearing any place, for the noise of the alleged rowing was becoming louder; though, of course, this increase of sound might be due to greater effort.

Bill knelt on the extreme edge of the rotted planking. The murk had become so thick that the lights only showed dimly. A vague outline appeared — a small skiff, wherein labored a human who gasped.

With the aid of a rope the boat reached the wharf, and Bill Driver drew Annie Hall to his hungry bosom.

"But don't fuss with me, Bill; we ain't got no time."

"'Ow?"

"That nigger guard's rifle and cartridgers is in the boat."

"Wot?"

"That guard on the Chief Commissioner's landing."

Bill Driver shivered at a certain recollection.

"You didn't kill the blighter, did yer?"

"No—I only 'it 'im. But I 'it 'im real 'ard, I did, and he won't 'ave anything to say for hisself for a bit. That's why we got to hurry—'cos when 'e does come

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o, 'e'll beef 'is bloomin' 'ead orf, tellin'."

"'Urry?"

"Yes—get all the grub you can get 'old of—I've got some. We're going to get away from here in that milk-boat of yours."

"Get away—where to?"

"Never mind that now—just hurry."

"It ain't right, lass, for you to do it. You go back, and I'll say I 'it the nigger."

"Don't you want to escape?"

"Yes—you know—but look at the weather; and if it were fine we wouldn't 'ave a chance. Go back."

"Don't you want me—Bill?"

They hurried with their preparations; and as they finished loading their few stores into the disreputable milk-boat the first heavy drops of rain began to fall.

"Hurry, Bill—get up the sail."

Now, Bill Driver, in his many moments of leisure, had constructed a strange arrangement of gunny-sacks, which he hoisted on an uncouth yard to a rugged mast. This he called a sail, and sometimes it had helped him in his work—more often it had afforded amusement to those who had watched. He hoisted this extraordinary contrivance, and the wind came with a rush as he cast off from the wharf. He had time to belay both sheets—which is not exactly good small-boat seamanship — and reach his heavy steering-oar, when the wind became a gale.

The gale came from the southwest, and Bill steered frantically before it—yawing a few degrees, of course—toward the opening between the islands that the *Shahjehan* took when bound for Rangoon. The thunder broke all around them; the rain fell like a wet, disintegrated blanket; the waves of the harbor spat at them.

PAST the *Minto* and *Shahjehan*, already straining at their cables, they fled. Between the gradually separating islands, where the half-quenched fires of the "jungly-wallers" flickered; missing certain rocks that a navigator knowing their whereabouts would surely have hit; wondering what was coming next, and bracing their souls to meet it. Thus, after two hours' frenzied navigation, they won to the open sea.

On their emergence from the more protected water, the following waves leaped at them like hungry wolves. They had no business to do anything but swamp at this point, but the bibulous god of chance was in his more kindly cups, and they continued to drive forward in the general direction of the northeast; Bill leaning all his great strength in amateurish endeavor at the steering-oar, while Annie crouched low and worked frantically at the unpleasant task of bailing. The sea increased, and the rain came down like successive layers of a lake, wind-lifted and wind-flung.

The gale played with the queer sail until that masterpiece looked like a medley of wildly gibbering rags strung together by a miracle, and about midnight a fiercer gust than before experienced carried the whole arrangement away. At the same moment the sheets parted, and the mast and yard went overboard. Naturally, the milk-boat broached to, but the raffle clung together and acted as a sea-anchor. She did not swamp, though she loaded about a ton of water. Then she steadied head to sea, and the two were in comparative safety.

Bill was for getting out the oars and trying to row before it; but Annie persuaded him from this folly. She nestled wetly in his arms and pointed out that they were taking less water aboard than before, and she convinced him that the *Minto* would make little of such weather, and that if she hit upon their course she would soon overtake them. So, she pleaded with him to rest, and then revealed the further marvel of her plan for their escape.

She told him how she had talked with a young officer of the *Shahjehan* during the passage from Calcutta, and how that muchly charmed person had shown her certain stars, which, if kept ahead, would lead the navigator to Burma. And she told of the great forests where they could hide; and the day came gloomily while she told him.

The rain still fell, but the wind no longer came in squalls. The sun was not visible. To cast off from their protecting raffle of sea-anchor seemed more foolish with the better sight of the waves, but Bill fumed at the delay, unaware of the fact that they were drifting steadily in the direction they wished to take. They were chilled through and they could make no fire, and they had to be sparing with their scanty stock of food.

They shivered in each others arms, yet there was a happiness in their shivering that mocked their natural apprehension.

Then, late in the afternoon, the rain ceased, and there was a warming touch of sunset among the clouds. Annie persuaded

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her man to a long sleep which should give him strength for the rowing that the next day should see started.

What time they awoke they never knew, neither did they know what instinct awakened them. Together they peered over the side of their clumsy craft at a long ray of light that seemed to be feeling for them like the tentacle of a hungry devil-fish. It was the search-light of the *Minto* at almost its extreme radius.

"They won't get me alive," growled Bill Driver.

"They ain't going to get us at all," whispered Annie Hall, as if afraid her voice might be heard over the miles of water between them and the ship.

The search-light seemed alive. Slowly it crept along the tossing waves, then it rested to make sure its prey was not in touch. Then it moved a little way, and stopped again. It was evidently combing every foot of its horizon, and the darkness of the night made the work the more certain.

The light undulated a few yards away. In an agony the two watched it. Then it came nearer, and rested again. Bill was growling like a gorilla at bay, and his deep voice mingled oddly with Annie's prayers and the strong wind.

"—— them! Oh, Gawd 'elp us. There ain't nothing we can do. They won't get me."

Annie's faith left her at that moment; and even the power to pray vanished in a medley of incoherence babbled against Bill Drivers' wet breast. The man, as if fight were imminent, bent his head and kissed her. He looked up again and found the light gone. He turned and saw that it had swept past and was feeling away from them. Still, it might come back, yet his heart beat more blithely than before.

There is something very curious about the shifting of that search-light. From the slow and careful way it was being worked one would deduce that its missing the milk-boat and its occupants was impossible, even at the distance it was being operated. Who was in charge of the thing? As I said, I do not know the time Bill and Annie awakened, so that it would not seem possible to tell who was on watch. But that search-light did act queerly—almost as if it were inspired.

Then the light disappeared entirely.

They sobbed in each other's arms, feeling sure that all danger was passed. Doubtless this reaction followed the law, but I am inclined to think that their love had attuned them to the Infinite, where fear, being a matter for the lesser things, is unknown. And with the passing of the night the wind softened into the regular, warmly scented southwest monsoon; the waves began to act decently. With the sunrise the clouds went upon another errand, and the milk-boat nodded lazily upon a lonely ocean.

Bill cast off from the protecting raffle and commenced his long task of rowing; while Annie began her housekeeping by tidying up the queer craft.

It was not any process of deduction or knowledge of meteorology that was responsible for the direction Bill rowed—before the wind. That course had so far carried them, and it seemed a good one to follow until the stars Annie had told about became visible. And so the man rowed that way, and perspired most freely.

The warm wind and sunlight cheered and dried them; and, the boat made more decent, Annie insisted on "double-banking" the oars. Between strokes they told each other, like two children, about the safety and comfort of the vast forests of Burma, where they would soon be hidden. I am inclined to regard this feeling about the forests as the most wonderful part of their faith, though, of course, faith itself has always transcended any intelligence I possess.

One may see some very wonderful sunsets in the Bay of Bengal, but not every one is interested in sunsets. The crew of the milk-boat were greatly interested in each other; besides, the sun that had kindly dried them in the morning had so persisted in its attentions that it had become more than embarrassing, and our friends had no way of rigging an awning. So, the evening cool was more to be admired than any celestial scenery.

They were also very busy with their meager supper. But as the colors faded, Annie almost screamed with delight, for out of her very limited knowledge of astronomy she had recognized the stars that she had been told led to Burma. As if fearful that the wished-for luminaries might suddenly decide to abandon their functions, the two humans scrambled for the ungainly oars, deflected the boat's course with much splashing, and rowed violently. Later, it dawned upon them that since their compass

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only worked at nights they had better do their sleeping during the day.

Age rusts the working parts the more quickly when they are not used—I know that you will itch to kick me for this platitude—but, if my memory is not altogether corroded, it is approximately three hundred and sixty miles from Port Blair to the nearest Burmese coast. You have my permission to correct me if I am wrong. The milk-boat was not of the clipper species—this truism may also annoy you—and strong as was Bill Driver, and willing as was Annie Hall, it may be another unnecessary statement to say that their task was a terrific one.

It is true that they were out of the general run of traffic, and were not, therefore, bothered by spectators; but all the same it was a marvelous voyage. I have spoken lightly of the god of chance, and you may say that the crew of the milk-boat were only extraordinarily lucky. But there is more in extraordinary luck than the law of averages takes account of, and the bibulous deity is only one of the many heathen deities I long ago invented for your amusement.

Would you have believed, in years gone, that I should ever grow to the opinion that the instinct to pray proves the existence of an unseen stimulus—since emotion can not react to nothing at all, even if nothing at all were possible? And, involved in this matter, was Annie's one fragment of regret.

To a woman of her type there is so much sanctity in love that she feels that her love should be sanctified, a desire that goes beyond the feminine pleasure found in bridal finery.

The latter days of their progress were a pain. Their food had gone and almost all their water. They were aided by the carelessness of two kindly flying-fish. These consumed, there followed a state of semi-delirium—one form of which being a haze that sometimes grew opaque, so that they wondered how they rowed through it.

Came a night when they sighted what seemed to be the lights of a small village; but their parched shoutings were fortunately not heard, since that village was the *Shahjehan*, bound for Rangoon for more convicts. Yet Bill's bull-like courage and Annie's faith persisted, even when the man's hardened palms leaked the blood he so sorely needed, and she was unable to sit up.

RESERVE strength of soul is like a deep well, from which we draw sustenance; and more than once have I seen it proven that a woman's is deeper than a man's. It happened one hot afternoon that a strange dream edged its way into Bill's delirium. He imagined himself in a large butcher-shop, wherein were hanging the ghosts of all the steaks and slices of red beef he had ever eaten.

These danced and jibbered at him, and he, of course, responded with anger. He struggled to his feet, raving. He cursed the ghosts as vigorously as a dry throat would permit, and this croaking roused his mate.

He had one foot on the gunwale and he was about to jump overboard in frenzied attempt to slay the ghosts that mocked him. Annie had lain on the bottom boards, too weak to move, for hours, but at the sight she rose without apparent effort and dragged him back, so that he awoke and lay crying with weakness in her arms. Then she fainted.

Again, when Bill fell away from the oars, and knew not that there was either earth or ocean, she reached them and rowed unsteadily toward her stars for perhaps two hours—till the man opened his eyes and found more strength in himself from the inspiration of the sight of hers.

And time became a succession of burning sun and horrible darkness, and the duration of that time a crawling eternity.

Will could no longer drive their weakened bodies. They lay with a sack that they had once soaked in the sea over their heads; but the sun had dried this protection, and they were too weak to rewet it. The cool of night came with a chilliness which hurt where it once had soothed. A glimmer of sane consciousness came to them both at the same moment. Their tortured bodies tried to nestle, but with the effort of the kiss their cracked lips craved they slipped again into blankness.

And the waves rocked the milk-boat, as if it were a cradle in which two tired children were going to sleep for a very long time.

Morning, and Bill came up from the depths of the unknown to another dream.

This time it was of a river, where bubbled all the beer he had ever drank. Again he clawed to the gunwale of the milk-boat. This time he was too weak to stand, and this time Annie's eyes did not open. Over the side he managed to fall—face downward in a

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shallow stream of fresh water. The shock gave him strength to turn slightly; and there he lay, absorbing, till his dazed mind limned a picture of Annie Hall.

The milk-boat had drifted in there with the wind and tide, far from any village, where the huge teak-trees turned the sunlight into a mellow greenness.

All about them lavish nature had arranged matters; and to assist them was the rifle and ammunition of the Sikh guard, which they had so carefully preserved. This was all they had to remove from the faithful milk-boat.

I am inclined to think that even the unemotional Bill Driver felt a touch of sorrow when, two evenings later, he rowed the crude old craft into the flaming sunset of the Gulf of Martaban, and sank her, lest she furnish any clue to possible pursuers.

Next morning they began their journey into the forest—not the least wonderful part of their effort. I do not know by what guidance they found the deeper shades and made a destination.

In the end they came to a place they called theirs, for they felt that it was theirs, where the huge trees formed a circle about a spring. And Annie, the marvelous, again delighted her mate with new wonders. She harked back to very early literature, and told him about the architectural ingenuity of the Swiss Family Robinson, who, it will be remembered, built their house in a tree.

She was pointing out the particular tree they would take for their own nest-building when there came upon them one who wore an exceedingly white duck suit, a monocle and an enormous solar topee. And this apparition smiled at them from the eye unwindowed, and twinkled at them from the eye that wore glass.

Of course you will have recognized Pickhead Cameron—Pickhead of the old days, whom we loved greatly—genial Lord of the Forest Service, Czar of millions of miles of timber, and kindly worshiper of thousands of fat Burmese babies.

Bill Driver, sensing the Government official, was for fight; but Annie saw beyond externals, and restrained him. Then she told Pickhead the whole of her story—with many allusions to the infernal book; and pleaded with him as a woman may. Warming to his smile, she knew that pleading was unnecessary; for Cameron rightly judged that the happiness of Annie Hall was of far more importance than the affairs of another section of that same Government which paid him his much-envied salary.

"And you won't tell on us, sir?"

"Er, of course not—er—er."

And from Bill Driver:

"We don't want nothing, sir, but to be left alone—like we wanted to be on them islands—to finish serving out the sentence."

"Er—er—of course."

He found a convenient branch for the repose of his topee; then he shook hands with them both. Thereafter his native embarrassment came upon him—you will remember that it did on occasions. He appeared to be most interested in a small monkey that was laughing at him from a near-by tree; his expression became rapt as he gazed upon his far-removed cousin, and he addressed it thus—

"Er—er—what church do you belong to?"

From the depths of astonishment Annie found answer.

"Church of England, sir," she said stoutly.

"Er—oh, yes, of course. Should have known. Er—pardon me, of course—er."

For some minutes he continued to gaze at the monkey in silence, and Bill Driver, doubtless thinking it was the proper thing to do, gazed also. And both men were gratified by the sight of the simian expertness with which that interesting animal caught a flea.

Stimulated into activity, Pickhead spoke again.

"Er—er—you won't be troubled—my camp is some distance away, and, er, I won't let any of my men come near you. Er—though I will do anything I can to help you—er—er."

Another interval given to study of the representative of the higher Primates. Ended when the monkey found business elsewhere.

"Er—I won't let my men come near you—you will be perfectly safe. But—er—er, there is with me, at my camp, a gentleman, a Scotchman, er, who is a missionary. Er—er—he is of an alien faith to ours—a Presbyterian, I believe—but—er, he is quite competent to—er—to—er—to perform the—er—ceremony—er, that is, if you don't mind."

I commend this to the gods of the old days, whose hearts are mellow, not only that they may lay the ashes of dead bets, but in the hope that they may bring me voices, where now there are only words.

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The Story of William Hyde

A Four-Part Story, Part II

by Patrick and Terence Casey

SYNOPSIS—*William Hyde*, his green parrot straddling his shoulder, escapes from an angry Hawaiian mob and is hauled over a ship's rail and into the forecastle by *Kildare*, one of the crew, along with *Fitzhamon* who has also fled the isle for another reason. *Hyde*, a gentleman born, explains that he was taking money from the natives with a "shell-and-pea" game, that he might accomplish the one thing he lives for—to return to Borneo and gain (along with something else) the Green, Green God, a treasure of which both the others have heard. *Hyde* then hints at a race of Tartars who guard the Jallan Batoe, an extinct volcano in the heart of Borneo, the subject of rumors throughout the South Seas. When *Fitzhamon* doubts that *Hyde* has actually seen the Green, Green God, the latter hammers him insensible, and, his experiences flooding back on him, is swept into telling his story to *Kildare:*

While hunting orchids (tells *Hyde*) I came upon this Jallan Batoe. A golden-skinned people live there—a leftover from a raid of the famous Genghis Khan; live in dwellings hollowed from huge stones that "sing" when they cool at night from the sun's heat. Their tradition is: that one day a descendant of Genghis Khan, his "man-child," with blue eyes and red beard, like the old Tartar emperor's own, would come—either to lead or destroy them. They looked into my blue eyes, marveled at my red beard, then led me to their *dobo* to make me king. There I saw the Green, Green God—a parrot carved from a single emerald. One of these people I loved—my *Golden Feather of Flame*. One of them, *Lip-Plak-Tengga*, high-priestess, semed to know I was only a white man. She loved me, but a fear of her grew up in me.

CHAPTER XII

A DIGRESSION CONCERNING THE GREEN, GREEN GOD, BY WHICH HYDE HALTS HIS STORY, AND ALL OF WHICH THE READER MAY SKIP, IF HE DARES

ABRUPTLY Hyde paused and reached out one big-veined, hairy hand and groped with it along the bedding of the bunk upon which he was sitting, for that last flask of whisky which neither Fitz nor he had quite finished.

I felt, at his abrupt actions, as a man must feel when rudely awakened from a dream by a dash of cold water on the face. I jumped in every muscle, every nerve of me. Out of my ears drifted the tomtoming and the unearthly death chant of all those Golden Women; before my eyes faded, like sun-smitten snow, the panoramic picture of that vast, glowing white cavern and the brilliant luster of all those gorgeous gems. I slumped down into my own world, and once more became aware of the recumbent figure of Fitz behind me, the sudorific closeness of the fo'c's'le all about, and the stench of the slush-lamp swaying slightly overhead.

Hyde quaffed deeply from that flask, screwed on the metal cap, wiped his stubbly lips with one hand, and made that concluding indescribable clucking. His voice took on an easy conversational tone.

"Before ever I got into the Jallan Batoe," he said, "I had heard of the Green, Green God. It was all legend, of course; all hearsay, as Fitz once said. But I heard of the Green, Green *Deewa* down in Malay Muk's in Banjermasin, on the Circular Quay of Sydney, up in the court of Sir Charles Brooke, the *Raj* of Sarawak, and in the pubs that border the Strand of Calcutta, the Cotton Green of Bombay. All through the South Seas, the vast Orient,

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everywhere the hot monsoon blows, I had heard of the Green, Green God, I say; and whenever I heard of it, I heard in the same breath that the God of the Poonan was really the Lost Emerald Parrot of the Great Mogul of Delhi."

He looked questioningly at me with his crisp blue eyes.

"You have heard of the Great Mogul of Delhi, Shah Jehan, haven't you, lad?"

I nodded. I'll admit I was quite taken up with what Hyde was telling me. His was the kind of talk to stimulate, if it did not wholly satisfy, all my youthful craving for adventure.

"You mean the East Indian Emperor who constructed the wondrous Taj Mahal as a sepulcher for one of his dead queens?" I half said, half asked, feeling none too certain of my history, though I had but just quit college.

Hyde nodded his red mane of hair.

"The same, lad. Shah Jehan, who was more an artist than a king, erected the Taj Mahal as a memorial of his wife and cousin, Mumtaz Mahal, the only woman whom he ever loved, who had died in childbirth shortly after he had mounted in good old Asiatic fashion—by murdering his brother—to the throne of his fathers. But it was to a favorite, the Pearl-Lily, the zenith in beauty of all his zenana, that he erected the Dewan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, in the Palace at Delhi."

"But what has that got to do with——"

"Everything, everything! The greatest marvel of that marvelous Dewan-i-Khas was the Peacock Throne. And of that throne, my story—aye, my whole life—has much to do.

"Austin de Bordeaux, a French virtuoso in gold-and-gem art, at that time a refugee in Delhi, built that Peacock Throne after the design made by Shah Jehan himself; and when it was completed, with all its gold and precious stones, it was worth the regal ransom of a rajah. Its estimated value was some thirty millions of dollars. For it was built, legs and arms and back and base, of a solid framework of pure gold, inlaid with stars of rare rubies and pure diamonds and great emeralds of shameful value, all gleaming from a white cloud of priceless pearls.

"It derived its name from the two life-size likenesses of peacocks, perched on the back of it at each corner and spreading their long tails of colorful gems behind it. Never had there been seen birds so strange, so shimmering, so splendid; for the many jewels that colored them in the dazzling hues of the peacock's plumage were the very spoil of the soil, the wonder of the waves!

"Yet, between those carved and polished peacocks, there sat a green parrot that surpassed even those two peacocks. It was carved, not out of many jewels, but out of a single enormous emerald! Think of that! An emerald, the purity and bigness of which the world has never duplicated, nor ever will duplicate even when the last prospector has scooped up the last treasure in all the world!

"Once, as I said, that wondrous throne stood in the Dewan-i-Khas of the Mogul's Palace in Delhi. The Persians, when they took that city in 1739, tore the throne to pieces in order the more easily to carry away its rich materials, with which they afterward embellished their own shah's throne. The Persians got the twin peacocks; that's the Peacock Throne of Persia today. What became of the Emerald Parrot, nobody knows. It is lost. But I found it in that Stone *Dobo* of the Orang Poonan. It's the Grēen, Green God!"

"But, Hyde," I objected, just as soon as my mind could grasp the startling significance of his statement, "how did that Emerald Parrot ever get from India down into the Jallan Batoe in the dark heart of Borneo?"

Hyde shrugged his massive, naked shoulders, without causing an awakening flutter, however, from that green parrot asleep on its strange perch.

"That's the mystery, lad. Legends and legends I heard from the Poonan, afterward, in explanation of how all those gorgeous gems and even that Menacing *Mandau* of Genghis Khan came to be in the Stone *Dobo*; but the Poonan themselves have only the vaguest sort of legend about the source of the Green, Green God.

"In *tempo doelo*, so that vague legend runs—in times gone by, as the Poonan say of anything which dates farther back than two generations, the Emerald Parrot flew down into the Jallan Batoe from the vast round O of sky, and took up its abode in the Stone *Dobo*. It was then a flying bird; but the moment it entered the cave-temple, a wondrous change began to be wrought in

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it. How long it took that change to work ere it reached its fulfillment, the Poonan do not attempt to reckon—it may have been days, they say, it most likely was many moons; but slowly, inevitably, they aver, the Emerald Parrot lost all life. In the end it turned into just what it is now—a dead, shimmering stone, miraculously carved.

"Of course, there must be a more natural explanation. I myself have a more natural explanation. You remember that the Poonan helped Soro Patti and his little Dyak band to withstand the Dutch? Well, I think that somehow, from some wandering member of his band, Soro Patti had got hold of the Emerald Parrot. I believe that he gave that Parrot to the Poonan as tribute to obtain their services.

"The Poonan themselves say that the Emerald came into the Jallan Batoe long after the Sending of the Sword of Genghis Khan, and not much farther back than four or five generations before my coming. That would bring the arrival of that Emerald Parrot around then to just about the same time as Soro Patti's insurrection.

"But it's all a mystery, anyhow!" Hyde went on. "And because it is such a mystery, the Wild Men of the Wilds look upon that Emerald—albeit it is the newest of their treasures—as the greatest of their treasures. To them it is a *tambatong* against evil, a god that has brought them all manner of good fortune.

"For ever since the Emerald Parrot flew down into the crater and turned into stone, they say, fortune has favored them—the crops have been abundant almost to excess, the earth has trembled only slightly during the hot season, the waters of the air have fallen copiously, the Golden Women have been fruitful and the Golden Men have died only because of old age. Fortune has favored them to a desire, because of the Green, Green God, they say, and the Jallan Batoe has been a paradise on earth.

"Wherefore, they never disturb the Emerald Parrot. It is never supposed to be taken out of the Glowing *Dobo*. Even during religious ceremonies when the Menacing *Mandau* and the Nine-Times-Nine Throne, all the jewels and the *kliaus* are borne through the avenues of the Jallan Batoe to the *tabu negorei* of *antus*—the cemetery. Even when once a twelfth month, like the Shinto worshippers of Japan, the beautiful Marshal Queen wears the Robe of Holies, and followed by the Priestesses, pays homage to the graves of her ancestors; even then, during that most solemn service of the Poonan, the Green, Green God is left alone and untouched upon its elevated shield in the Stone *Dobo!*

"No Poonan will touch it, or allow it to be touched. Its shimmering greenness is more sacred to them than even the person of the *Orlok Radenajo*, the graves of their dead and worshiped ancestors. For it is a mystical God-given treasure to them—a god in itself!

"I tell you, it's the awe of the Poonan, of all men who have seen it. Aye, or heard of it! A parrot made from a single emerald, twelve inches long, one whole foot! It's big, I tell you! A single emerald, man, big as Mogul here!"

Hyde lifted the green parrot, with the words, from his brown and beaded shoulder. The parrot was startled from its sleep. Its flesh-colored lids ran up like window-shades; its pointed green wings beat twice, in a wild flutter, upon the short square tail. It seemed affrighted by the sudden move. Desperately, two toes before and two behind, it clung with one foot to the extended index finger of Hyde's right hand.

Hyde held the parrot toward me, and I well recollect how its eyes blinked redly into mine.

"A single emerald, big as Mogul!" Hyde repeated fervidly. "That's why I call the old boy, Mogul. He has the same dentations on the margin of the bills, the same squareness of the short tail, the same shimmering green as the Emerald Parrot of the Moguls of Delhi! No blue band over his forehead, no black feathers edging his neck —nothing but green, just like the Emerald!"

Hyde grasped my knees with his free left hand.

"That Emerald has been shaped and wrought, cut and engraved and polished by the most skilful lapidaries in all India. Why, Mogul here—the old imitator—had he been on my shoulder when I was in that Stone *Dobo* would have been fooled himself by that wondrous Parrot. He would have thought it one of his own kind, a live parrot. He would have fluttered down beside it, to bill and coo and make love of it!

"It seems alive! It's carved as by a god hand! It's fooled even the Poonan! I tell you, it's such a marvel of carving, of

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sculpturing, that those marvelous sculptors of the stupendous stones, the Poonan themselves, worship it as a god. The greatest light ever lifted from any land! That's the Green, Green God!"

His face blood-red as a harvest moon with his enthusiasm, Hyde broke off to replace the parrot, Mogul, on his sweating shoulder. The parrot nestled down against that flaming dog-collar of beard, blinked his red eyes at me; then the flesh-colored window-shades rolled down.

And then that parrot, the recumbent figure of the sleeping Fitz, the shadowy rows of bunks of that fo'c's'le, even that flaming-haired shell-and-pea fakir himself, vanished from before my eyes. I was listening, once again, to Hyde's harebrained, staggering story. Before my eyes were the vast glowing interior of that stone *Dobo*, the stream of Golden Men, the kneeling multitude of Golden Women, and that stupendous terrible array of priceless imperishable gems.

CHAPTER XIII

"They Came and They Sapped, They Fired and They Slew,
Trussed Up Their Loot and Were Gone!"
—Ancient Persian Poet.

THE GUNNER and *Mohong Wook* walked on before me toward that lofty altar dais (began Hyde, taking up the thread of his story from where he had left off). Up the nine stone stairs we went to a gateway in that white balustrade. That gateway, like the stairs and the balustrade, was carved out of the white stone. It was hinged on pivots of the living stone, jutting from the top and bottom rails of the gate and swinging in bowls hollowed in the balustrade.

With my eyes swimming under all that glare of stone, all that red glowing light from the myriad torches, all that dazzle of color from the prodigious treasure, I followed the two Chieftains inside that semicircle of shields and approached the great Nine-Times-Nine Throne in the center, jewel-studded but empty.

Six feet or so in the rear of that great throne, stretching on a single thick knobby bamboo pole from sacristy to sacristy, clear across the back of the altar space, was a mat of bleached pandanus, forty feet or more in extent and fully ten feet high. Flanking that throne on each side and immediately behind were nine balls of fire, glowing redly from long sago leaves in as many inverted gongs. And those gongs, of solid gold, stood like the throne on stalagmites of stone that projected, slim as white fingers, up from the flooring.

Just without those balls of red-fire, to either hand of the throne, the two chieftains now took up their stand.

I approached that Nine - Times - Nine Throne with a certain assurance. From the words of old *Mohong*, as I now familiarly called in my own mind that aged Chief, I realized that I was supposed to sit upon the throne. Both he and the Gunner were expectantly waiting for me to sit upon that throne.

"Then, indeed," I said half-facetiously to myself, "then, indeed, must I be the Man-Child of Genghis Khan!" And I sat down upon the slight swell of that throne.

But that lofty throne was no soft seat, no luxuriously cushioned divan. So studded was it with scrolls and designs of precious stones that it was like a seat of sharp-pointed tacks. I tell you, for a breath, I thought I was a boy back in England once again and the unsuspecting victim of a time-honored school-day prank. Beyond those red balls of fire, through the pillars of white smoke on my right hand, I could swear old *Mohong* was laughing at my discomfort with his black slits of eyes.

Wherefore, I turned quickly from him and faced that whole stupendous assemblage. In a heap, as I did, it suddenly struck me what a figure I cut, there among all those glowing fires and dazzling gems, high above all those richly skin-covered men and all those wondrously garbed, wondrously beautiful women!

Can you imagine the scene? On my right hand was that glinting massive ivory —and jewel-hilted sword; on my left, that inimitable Green, Green God, shimmering a deep green like a reach of jungle; and between was I, sitting quite cautiously, I assure you, on the fine-chiseled gems of that throne. But I, Willyum Hyde, my boots dangling from my feet in shreds of leather, my worn khaki trousers spotted a piebald ochre with the mottled muck of jungle, my hickory shirt open at the neck with the heat to show a chest of red hairs; my beard red and uncut and unkempt, and my uncombed

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hair matted with sweat and trailing in red streaks down into my eyes!

"All I need to complete this pretty picture of a vagabond Crœsus," I smiled inwardly, "is a cigarette pasted on my lip ——"

I broke off abruptly. For abruptly, as by a shock of electricity, that whole stupendous assemblage had come to sudden life. The long circling stream of men raised their heads; like a prairie of tall grass lifting up after a bowing breath of wind, up bobbed the beautiful delicate faces of all those women. With almond eyes agleam as with expectancy, they looked directly up at me.

"Well," I asked myself, attempting to return the look of all those exotic beauties, "now what's next on the programme?"

I expected, naturally, the next move from them. But the next move came not from them. It came from behind me, from beyond the Green, Green God on the eighth *kliau*.

OF A SUDDEN, with a klecking sound I could hear in all that expectant stillness, the hangings of rare feathers, woven with embroideries of gold and silver thread, were swept aside from the left-hand sacristy. Forth like a vision from the Araby of Imagination, stepped a beautiful Golden Woman.

"My Golden Feather of Flame!" I breathed.

For a trice, my heart stopped beating, and only splotches of colorful lights danced before my love-sick dizzied eyes. Then, alas! I saw that her hair was not red as the rawness of gold, nor were her eyes of the bluish-green of turquoise!

Black as the jungle was her hair, blue-black as the jungle where the overarching canopy of foliage shuts out every random ray of sunlight; and almost black were her eyes, blackish-brown and wickedly alluring with their evil slant of lids! She was the High Priestess, *Lip-Plak-Tengga!*

I tell you, for the nonce, my heart sank—sank with a heaviness like that of lead. Where was the Marshal Queen? I asked myself. Where was she who had mourned because of my coming? I felt like shouting. I felt like shouting full at that High Priestess:

"What have you done to her? What have you done to my beautiful Golden Feather of Flame?"

But, with the very thought, my heart seemed to bound from my boots to my throat. It choked me. You remember I was an orchid-hunter. Well here, on that imperious High Priestess, I saw orchids that were worth, each and every one, the very life blood of a man of my kind! Out in the world where there were shop-windows and horse-shows and five-o'clock teas, those orchids were the fad in fashion, the shame in price!

She was robed, that High Priestess, from the gentle curve of her bosoms to the gold bangles jingling on her golden ankles, in a gown made entirely of interlaced orchids—living red, red orchids! They were those very orchids known in Borneo as "The Blood Drops of *Deewal*"

Two of those "Blood Drops of God" held the gown over the droop of either slim shoulder. A single orchid, red as pigeon-blood ruby, was entwined in the glossy blue-blackness of her snaky tresses. On her bare round golden arms were armlets of rare platinum. But the whole effect was one of daring dazzling red on a feline form of olive-gold skin, of blue-black hair, of dark evil eyes.

Behind that silique-eyed High Priestess walked nine youngish oblong-eyed men—the same that had been in her retinue that day. They were garbed down to the *jawat* in strips of tiger skin flung over their left shoulder; strips of bright orange-yellow, edged with white and striped by black bars, the warmly colored tiger skin which in the East is considered the emblem of mystic power. They were the Priests.

They walked, those Priests, two by two, with a wide space between the men in each pair, the ninth Priest bringing up the rear, and all holding between them—just as a gargantuan flag is borne in a parade—a robe made of thickly woven salmon silk, solid and heavy and shining with jewels; diamonds, amethyst, green jade, red and amber garnets, stars of sapphires, rings of rubies, ellipses of emeralds and clouds of white pearls, a blend of colorful jewels as gorgeous and flawless as the undying colors of a Royal Kirmanshaw rug. That was the Robe of Holies!

Now, flanking each Priest like a familiar, walked a woman. They were the Priestesses, nine in number and all rarely

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beautiful. They were dressed like their High Priestess, *Lip-Plak-Tengga*, in plaited orchid gowns as if in an attempt to resemble some particular variety of jewel in that Robe of Holies.

One was gowned in Disa Longicornis orchids, violet-blue as the amethysts of the robe; another in orchids that looked like the Lost Orchid of Thibet—that were white and daintily dappled with black mottlings and that seemed to shimmer, in the white glare of stone, with high lights and shadows just like diamonds; another in my Coelogyne Lowii, the priceless "Flowers of Mercy" of Borneo, white as the clouds of pearls in that robe; and still another in a lost species of orchid for which I know no name, but which gleamed as delicately brown as the pellucid amber garnets or the resplendent eyes of the Priestesses themselves.

The golden-olive High Priestess stood before me, a silken sorceress in her "Blood Drop" gown. And looking at her, I saw for a surety now that she was sublimely beautiful—her nose sensitively chiseled and imperious as Minerva's, her buds of bosoms quickly rising and falling, like fretful wavelets, beneath the daring diaphaneity of her orchid gown, and her skin, where it was visible, as sleekly golden as the soft bed of dreams. There was in her alluringly wicked eyes and in that quick rise and fall of her breasts a sort of triumphant emotion, as if indeed she were intoxicated with triumph.

"Can it be," the thought went thudding through my head, "can it be she is glorying over some evil deed? What is it? Has she dispossessed my Golden Feather of Flame of some queenly right? Is she about to take unto herself now some prerogative of that Marshal Queen?"

But that was no time to determine the answer. Behind the slim High Priestess, in the deep space between the white stone balustrade and the semicircle of shields, the flowery Priestesses and the youngish Priests were ranging themselves, the latter still bearing between them that magnificent Robe of Holies. To all appearances, the ceremony which I had thought was half over at least, was in reality just about to begin.

The jingle of the gold and silver bangles on the twinkling feet of the Priestesses died away. The stupendous assemblage beyond and below that white stone balustrade went deathly still. In that whole cyclopean cavern of the *Dobo* there seemed not a living breath. Even the red fires on either hand of me burned without a sound. It was a vacuum of stillness.

But suddenly the High Priestess, Flower of the Silver Star, bowed low to the white flooring before me, then, upflinging both golden arms above her head, in all that unearthly stillness, she spoke:

"O Man-Child of Genghis, the Great and Good! *Arrê!*

"Long, long ago, in far *tempo doelo*, we, the Orang Poonan, the Wild Men of the Wilds, were Tartars and lived in Tartary, the *negorei* (country) where the golden rhubarb grows and the *plandok* is without horns and bears behind its navel a sweet smell. Our Liege and Lord—aye, and the Lord of all the Tartars—was Genghis Khan, the Supreme Khan of Khans!

"And Genghis Khan, at that time, had conquered the whole Eastern World, save only one place—the place of savages and jungles; and that place was the Continent of Borneo. So Genghis Khan sent across the vast *laut* (sea) some nine *Tomans* of Tartars to conquer Borneo. That was the *Tojout-Plo-Sie*, the Nine-Times-Nine, the most Extraordinary Expedition ever undertaken by the Tartars.

"Across the blue sea those Tartars floated in many junks, and each junk was stepped with four masts and twelve great sails; and when the weather favored, they lifted to the breeze a topsail of silk, crimson as the sun. Three banks of rowers, one above the other, bent and pulled and grunted down below under the whiplashes of Tartar *Sartaks*; and the sweeps that gleamed and dripped dye-blue were nine times nine in number!

"The moon rose up out of the sea like a slice of orange, and swelled through the nights till it bloated with blood, then sunk out of sight, a curved waning silver. A new moon rose up, swelled, and slipped down again. And then—*Ahêl* Far, far away, they sighted the greenness of Borneo."

Now, there was that in the words of the woman which convinced me of a tremendous idea that I long had looked upon as a wild fancy. Since I had entered the Jallan Batoe, to be sure, that idea had grown on me with bits and added bits of proof. But

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here in her words was proof incontestable, proof positive. The Poonan, of a surety, were of Tartar stock! Of a surety, they were descendants of those nine *Tomans*, ninety thousand Tartars, who had invaded Borneo!

The High Priestess spoke on, a cascade of words inflected by rippling musical notes. I listened, and as the meaning of those words seeped into my brains, my heart seemed to trip and choke me. For there were pictures in those words: pictures of her Tartar ancestors as they had been seven hundred years before; pictures of wars and plunder and blood, and all the triumphs of medieval conquest.

Hers was a wonderful word-picture. So wonderful was it, in fact, that it reeled off before my eyes, clear as a motion-picture, the spectacular panorama of the landing in Borneo, of the fighting!

I SWISHED aside the thick tapestry of time. I saw those nine *Tomans* of Tartars. Tartars were everywhere, numerous as a swarm of bees. For in each *Toman* I counted ten thousand men. A horde of Mongol myrmidons, men small of eye, leathery of complexion, they were; men encased in armor of buffalo hides and steel and silver and gold; men armed with long bows and arrows, swords and maces, lances and tomtoms and great shields! Horsemen rode ahead to reconnoiter, and horsemen rode in the rear and on either flank; and behind each horseman was a foot-soldier, mounted on the crupper and armed with lance, long bow and arrows!

The arrows of those Tartars, the poisoned darts of their enemy, the Dyaks, flew through the air like rain. Tartar horses streaked back and forth, their bellies almost scraping the ground. The color of that ground was no longer green, but red with blood!

I saw all, all! I saw the Dyaks, clad in padded hides of native animals, their ears slitted and weighed down to their shoulders with barbarous ornaments, and their only arms, long *sumpitans*, curved swords and hair-tasseled shields, fighting on foot, manfully. But the Tartars were too quick and too many for them. Rank by rank, they retreated slowly back into the palisading growths of the jungle.

Followed then, in the rippling notes of *Lip-Plak-Tengga's* words, pictures of plunder and devastation and loot. From Sarawak to Sandakan, and from Sandakan to Samarinda, the Tartars controlled the Bornean coast. From the Sultans of Brunei and Sarawak and Koetei, they demanded tribute. And that tribute—tribute of bells with pearls for tongues, fishes with eyes of rubies, and crescents and moons and suns with disks and rays of gold—all that tribute, they trussed up for their Supreme Khan of Khans.

"*Arrê!*" sang the High Priestess, her arms fluttering down to her sides like golden wings. "Behold! That is the treasure of the Poonan today, the treasure of the Stone *Dobo*, the treasure all about thee! For, ere that treasure could be collected in its entirety, a courier arrived from Tartary bringing word to Genghis Khan that there was treachery and revolt in Persia, the *negorei* he had but lately abased. Three *Tomans* of Tartars the Great Khan left behind under command of his third born son, Yeh-Lu Apushka, to govern the land he had conquered in Borneo. But with the other six *Tomans* and all the junks, Genghis Khan sailed away.

"We never saw the Great and Good One more. Never more, since Yeh-Lu Apushka obeyed the Sending of the Sword, have we been governed by male issue of Genghis Khan. And seven hundred years passed, but no one came. Yet there was a promise of a Coming. In the Sending of the Sword it was said that another would come who would have red hair and blue eyes. He would be a Man-Child of Genghis Khan!

"*Arrê!* And now you come! And though you are not in kingly raiment, though you have come to us in tatters and without scepter or sword, you have the same red hair, the same red beard, the same blue eyes as had Genghis Khan! Thus do we know you to be a son of that Supreme Khan of Khans. You are the Man-Child of Genghis, the Great and Good! *Ahê!* You are the Man-Child who was to come!"

I leaped afoot. Her words ringing through the rind of my being like shots on a bull's-eye, lifted out of myself, I leaped afoot before that singing High Priestess.

At my action, as at a signal, her voice rose into a scalp-tightening scream.

"People of the Poonan, behold!" she screamed. "Is he not the Man-Child of Genghis Khan? *Li-liat;* look!" And she

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lifted one platinum-banded arm and dramatically pointed behind me.

Mohong Wook and the Gunner fell back. I swung round.

The two Chiefs, as I swung 'round, pulled down with one jerk that mat of pleached pandanus which had formed a curtain across the rear of the dais. Behind it, draping from the knobby bamboo pole like some wonderful tapestry, was a rug—a rare old Chinese rug. Old it was as those rare rugs which the soldier-vandals of the Allies tore from the Temple of Heaven in the Third Inner City of Pekin at the time of the Boxer outbreak; yet, as with those rare old rugs, the colors of that rug were vivid and glowing as moonlight, undying and imperishable as time!

Ten feet high by forty feet long it was. There was, wondrously woven on it, an effect of a light-blue sweep of sky, a greenish floor of earth, and standing in the exact center, immediately behind the throne, facing me, his right hand on the nostrils of a waiting horse, the life-size figure of a man.

A monolith of a man he was, wide-spread, flat-muscled and over six feet tall. His beard and hair were red as rubies! His eyes were blue—blue as azurite. He was the likeness of Genghis Khan!

"*Ahê!*" came in a terrific shout from that multitude behind me. "*Seek laha wook!* Hair red as blood! Eyes blue as the sky! One and the same! Genghis Khan and the Man-Child! *Arrê!*"

I stood up, staggered, overwhelmed, almost affrighted. That shout burst upon my head, sloughing over my brains like liquid fire, comprehension, complete comprehension, of the whyfore of all that had befallen me.

Genghis Khan, that world-girdling conqueror, that long-dead Lord of all the Tartars, had looked like me! Yes; like me with my blue eyes and red hair and thick red brush of beard!

I remembered then, and of a sudden, despite the whirling of my staggered brains, that as a youth I had read that identical startling description of Genghis Khan in Marco Polo's famous book of travel. The very words of that long-forgotten description shot then, in vivid flashes, through my head.

"All the descendants of Yesugai, father of Genghis," the Venetian had written, "are distinguished by blue eyes and reddish hair!"

And I, Willyum Hyde, "out" from England after orchids at the end of the nineteenth century, but just now after the Green, Green God—I was believed, by these Poonan, to be a lineal descendant of that great Tartar monarch of the Middle Ages! That was why all the Golden People—from the green-eyed Marshal Queen, the haughty High Priestess, down to the poorest of the Poonan—had looked with so much wonderment into my eyes, had so childishly felt of my red hair, of my red beard!

I looked as Genghis Khan had looked seven hundred years before! I had red hair, blue eyes. I was, forsooth, the promised Man-Child of Genghis Khan.

CHAPTER XIV

WHEREIN HYDE FEARS HE HAS LOST ETERNALLY THE MARSHAL QUEEN, GOLDEN FEATHER OF FLAME

THERE I stood, towering above all that bowing, shouting multitude. Well, as I stood there, I felt a sudden qualm for myself. In a heap I realized what a tremendous imposture I was living and acting before the very eyes of all those people.

And yet, as if to add overwhelmingly to that imposture, the nine youngish Priests, bearing the Robe of Holies, stepped up behind me now and laid that Robe of Holies upon my shoulders! Two tasseled cords of silk bound that robe in front so that it could not fall off. That Robe of Holies fell about me now, from shoulders to ankles, like some glorious cloak.

It was the very Robe of Holies that the blue-eyed, red-haired son of Genghis Khan, Yeh-Lu Apushka, himself had worn. This, and more than this, I learned afterward. I learned that the only ones that had worn it since Yeh-Lu Apushka were the *Orlok Radenajos* of the Poonan who were direct descendants of that son. And they had worn it only once a twelvemonth when, like the Shinto worshipers of Japan, they had made reverence to the graves of their ancestors; and when, in the due order of succession, they had been exalted to the Nine-Times-Nine Throne.

It was too heavy to permit of more use than that. That Robe of Holies weighed

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fully fifty pounds. It was heavy with jewels which those Marshal Queens of the Poonan had added to it since the time of Yeh-Lu Apushka, the first *Raj* of the Wild Men of the Wilds.

And now it was upon my shoulders! And beyond that white balustrade, that stupendous assemblage was bowing nine times before me and singsonging in a great voice:

"*Arrê!* Behold! The *Toewan Orlok Raj! Ahê!*"

I KNEW then what all that meant —I who was thought to be another son of Genghis Khan himself—they were making me the *Toewan Orlok Raj*, the Great Marshal King of the Poonan!

I knew then, I say; and then, immediately on the back of it, I remembered. With a cold stilling of heart, I remembered. That was why my beautiful Golden Feather of Flame had mourned because of my coming! I was usurping her queenly crown! That was why she had not appeared even during this great ceremony in the Stone *Dobo!* She had known I would take her place!

I was troubled, I tell you, terribly troubled. All along I had felt hope that sometime, somehow, I would win to that high and mighty Golden Goddess. But the way of women I well knew! That insane hope died. A weight of fear downbore my heart more even than that heavy Robe of Holies downbore my shoulders.

"She'll hate me!" each fearful thump of my heart told me. "She'll hate me now because I have pulled her down and climbed above her head!"

I did not know what to do. I was in a trap. I did not want that position of power. I wanted to tell the Poonan so. I wanted to shout:

"I'm not the *Toewan Orlok Raj!* I'm not the Man-Child of Genghis Khan at all! I'm only Willyum Hyde, Willyum Hyde! I'm only a poor orchid-chaser who loves your Queen!"

One thing stopped me. It was a dreadful thing. If I shouted that, I would lose not only that position of power; I would lose the Green, Green God, my head, the Golden Goddess—everything! The Poonan in their wrath for my having duped them, would rise up and kill me.

I tell you, what to think, what to do, had never before seemed to me such tremendous questions. For a fleeting moment, indeed, a mad plan seized me. I would grab up the Green, Green God, shrug out of that Robe of Holies, leap over the white balustrade, down the nine stairs, and out of that cave-temple between the rows of women!

I had lost all hope, I swear, of ever winning that green-eyed Marshal Queen. She could never reciprocate my love, now. I must leave her behind. I must leave the jewels, that robe on my shoulders—all, all behind me! I only would attempt to escape with the Green, Green God to the outside of the crater, and civilization.

But the plan came still-born. I looked over the rows and tightly packed rows of Golden Women beyond and below me, the double line of men against the walls. All their eyes were on me. I knew for a certitude then, I never would be able to get out of that *Dobo* with the god, never be able to accomplish that mad feat alive!

CHAPTER XV

OF THE SENDING OF THE SWORD

THE EVIL-EYED High Priestess slumped to her knees on the white stone of the flooring before me. She looked up at me, as I towered above her in that robe of holies. And her eyes were wide now, her dark brown irises dull as with a kind of fear of me!

Then, once again, she began speaking. But she did not sing her words; she wailed. With a sort of mournful abandon, her voice rose and fell and held for breathing intervals on the oddest of notes. She wailed just as all those women had wailed when first I had entered the *Dobo*.

To me, it sounded like the mourning keen of the Maori, the Tahitian; and I have heard something like it at funerals in Honolulu where the *kahilis* of black and white feathers have given place to hearses and modern undertaking appurtenances, but where the primitive song of death still remains. That was it! It was a death chant, a wild unearthly death chant!

I felt a suggestion of fear. But that came not only because of the unearthly qualities of her wail. There were pictures in that wail, also; pictures not of the triumphs of war now, but pictures and pictures of the hardships and miseries and terrible horrors of war.

I forgot that cyclopean columnated

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cavern. I forgot all those motionless men and women beyond the balustrade and below, *Mohong Wook* and the Gunner behind, the priests and priestesses immediately before me, the *Mandau* and Green, Green God and all the treasure right about. All, all were gone; and only sobbed in my ears the weird wail of *Lip-Plak-Tengga.*

But, at that wail, I saw now the Tartars milking their last camel, slaying their last ox, eating their last sheep on the coast of Borneo. They were surrounded. They were surrounded by Dyaks who came from the jungles and Dyaks who came from Banjermasin in a fleet of war-boats. That fleet of war-boats was like some Asiatic armada. In that fleet were many huge *proas,* a hundred *tambangans* and countless little *gobangs* crowded to the gunwales with Dyak warriors!

The *Toman* of Tartars stationed at Samarinda, ten thousand in all, tried to drive them off from landing. But the Dyaks far outnumbered the Tartars. They beat off the Tartars with paddles and sweeps. With their swords, they carved off the legs and heads of the swimming horses. The ten-inch-long darts of their *sumpitans* drove through the Tartar horsemen and the foot-soldiers mounted behind, and through and through them, binding them together like chunks of meat on a spit! Tartar heads floated on the water like shed nuts of the cocoa-palm. It was carnage!

Slowly, fighting hard but sadly decimated, the Tartars retreated back and back toward the jungles. Led by Yeh-Lu Apushka, with even the women and children fighting now, they forced a passage through the ranks of the Dyaks behind and took to the twilight sunken runways of the jungles.

Through mire and grass-grown glade and interwoven brush, between palisading palms and dripping ferns and huge-limbed trees, they made their way. The Dyaks pursued them closely. The Dyaks knew the jungles and the paths in the jungles. Time after time, they circled 'round them, cutting off reconnoitering detachments of horsemen and bodies of men thrown out on the flank.

For twenty days, without stopping to light a fire, through unending jungles the Tartars rode. They had no time nor any arrows to spare to shoot down animals of the jungles for food. They sustained themselves on the blood of the horses they rode! They dismounted and opened veins in those horses and drank the blood as it spouted into their mouths; then closed the wounds with some rhubarb plaster, mounted and rode on!

And then, in the dawn of the twenty-first day, Yeh-Lu Apushka, riding ahead, sighted some miles away the volcanic peak of the Jallan Batoe. Next was found the tunnel through the rock, caused by the wearing process of the river from the crater. In marched the few surviving Tartars into the crater—their women and children and enfeebled horses. And here, in the narrow dark confines of the rock tunnel, they were able to gather enough strength to beat off the still pursuing Dyaks. They were safe.

The High Priestess wailed on; and I saw Yeh-Lu Apushka sending out, a short time later, a courier who was none other than *Lip-Plak-Tengga's* ancestor, a Warrior High Priest. He was to give word of their plight and obtain help from the Tartars of the northern coast. If those Tartars were no more, as was greatly feared, that courier was to go on by boat to the court of Genghis Khan himself.

Of black bosques of evilness and swelled rivers and broken walls of mountains, the High Priestess chanted; and I saw her ancestor, the courier, breaking through the sweating lush and monster growths of the jungles, following through a darkness that was damp the River Barito to its source in the uplands of Sarawak, and then climbing down those uplands to the coast.

But the Warrior High Priest did not meet with any band of Tartars. All the Tartars of Borneo had been wiped out completely by the Dyaks, save only those few hundred Tartars in the crater of the Jallan Batoe. And so it was that, in the tolling of the chant, I came to see that Warrior High Priest embarking in disguise on a Malay *proa.* The coast of China hove in view during the fulness of the second moon; then the golden domes and silver towers and marble minarets of *Kaipingfu,* the City of Peace and the imperial residence of Genghis Khan.

Rose then, before me, the sumptuous court of the Tartar Khanate; and I saw that Supreme Khan of Khans seated on his golden throne in a robe of crimson silk with a girdle of gold. In his right hand he wielded a scepter made of a solid bar of gold and topped off by a monster ball of ruby. Beside him, seated upon the golden throne on

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his left hand and robed in a gown of crimson damask, with bodice ribbed with gold, was the Khatun of the Fair Breath, Burte Fujin, his favorite wife.

The High Priestess' wailing voice broke with emotion, and I seemed to hear her ancestor's voice breaking with grief as he recited to Genghis Khan what had befallen his legions beyond the seas. Genghis dropped his ruby scepter. With terrible anger, his small blue eyes gleamed, his leathery face went as red as his beard and hair. He grabbed up his great sword.

"The Tartars of Borneo are defeated?" he cried in a mighty voice. "Then those Tartars must die! No Tartar gives quarter to the defeated; no Tartar when defeated himself, should expect to live. He should die. He should die by his own hand, for he no longer may ride with undefeated Tartar warriors!

"Therefore I send by you, O Warrior High Priest, the Menacing *Mandau.* The law of that Sending must be obeyed. All the Tartars of Borneo—aye, to the last man—must carry out the Sending of the Sword. I look to my Man-Child, Yeh-Lu Apushka, to fulfill that Sending. If he does not fulfill that Sending, another Man-Child shall come from Tartary. Then shall the reckoning be!"

Burte Fujin grasped his sword-arm. She pleaded piteously with her tears for the Tartars of Borneo. She knew what dread law was attached to that Sending! But Genghis Khan thrust her aside. He sent back to the Jallan Batoe by that same courier his great sword, a massive curved affair—the very ivory-and jewel-hilted *mandau* on my right hand!

CHAPTER XVI

AND OF THE SIN OF THE POONAN

CAME then, in the intoning of the chant, a picture of a great gathering in this very cave-temple of the Stone *Dobo.* Twelve moons had come and gone in the while that the courier had been on his journey and the Tartars, all that while, had busied themselves in enlarging the natural caves in the monster stones, in fashioning out others, and in carving and adorning this most unique and hugest cave of all.

I saw that great gathering, and then I saw Yeh-Lu Apushka come out upon the raised dais, wrapped in a robe of salmon-colored silk, the sword of Genghis Khan in his hand. With that sword, exactly after the fashion of hara-kiri as it is practiced in Japan to-day, he was supposed to wipe out the disgrace of defeat by disemboweling himself!

There before all his people, just as prescribed by the Sending, Yeh-Lu Apushka killed himself. In a hideous heap, he fell to the white flooring, the blood from his torn stomach dyeing to a thick red the whiteness of that flooring, the salmon-pink of the robe.

Wherefore, Flower of the Silver Star wailed, because his blood—the blood of a Khan, of the First *Raj* of the Borneo Tartars—had soaked into that robe, that robe thereafter became a hallowed vestment. It became the Robe of Holies, so heavy with jewels, upon my shoulders at that moment.

In a wild stampede then, the Tartar men had made toward the dais. They were supposed to follow the suicidal example of their *Raj.* Each man in the order of his rank down to the least and last man, all were supposed to wipe out the disgrace of defeat with that sword of Genghis Khan. That was the dread law of the Sending.

But the Tartar women flung themselves before them.

"Wait, wait!" they cried. "Do not obey the Sending until we have spoken! And why should you obey that Sending? Why should you obey the law of Genghis Khan at all? Did Genghis Khan send you aid in your last extremity? *Nda, ndal* Only his sword he sent!

"Therefore do not kill yourselves with that sword! Do not obey Genghis Khan any more! Set up a Khanate here separate from that of Genghis Khan! Genghis Khan can never touch you; you are safe here. *Li-liat;* look! There are walls of living rock all about; inside, in this crater, is a place that is a garden of plenty. Why then disembowel yourselves? Why abandon yourselves with Yeh-Lu Apushka into the black abyss of Abaddon? Live, live, and we shall make thee happy! Have paradise on earth, for it is here, it is here, it is here!"

The men succumbed to the temptation. There were promises irresistible in the words, in the eyes, of their women.

The First *Raj* of the Borneo Tartars, Yeh-Lu Apushka, had left behind when he had obeyed the Sending of the Sword, a

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little daughter who was golden-haired and blue-eyed. They made her their *Orlok Radenajo*. It was contrary to all their history, all their Tartar institutions of male rulership; but they had cut away from most things that savored of Tartary. They made her the Marshal Queen of the Orang Poonan, which was the name they took and which means in Dyak, Wild Men of the Wilds.

In the tolling of the wail now, I saw the passage of years; and I saw, all through those years, the Poonan living on, a pure-blooded Tartar stock, speaking a language of bastard Dyak and Malay and Tartar. That was the only taint they allowed into the Jallan Batoe.

Through seven hundred years they lived without allowing any other race to mix their blood with theirs. They were like the San Blas Indians of Panama in that. No Dyaks, Malays or Boegis were permitted to enter the Field of Stones. The Poonan were ethnically pure.

The women ruled the men and that was their law. You see, the women who had followed the expedition and survived the travails of the jungles were very few and, naturally, the first Poonan had well-nigh worshiped the ground upon which they had walked. Also, those few women had been the tempting reason why they had dared to disobey the Sending of the Sword, and for that they were fearfully thankful. It was a millennium of woman.

But, above all, the women held them in such subjugation because of two very good reasons. The men, they said, had been disastrous failures as khans and couriers and councilors. Wherefore, from that precedent of a Marshal Queen, they so reversed the conventions of the Tartars as to make it a law that only female descendants of that First Queen were supposed to rule, only female descendants of that Warrior High Priest were supposed to be High Priestesses, and only the old women of the Poonan were supposed to form the Councils of the Queens. The men could only become *adjies* or inferior chieftains, and lesser Priests. The new law gave into the women's hands all governing power.

The other reason, however, was a far more cogent reason. It was a threat.

"Disobey us," the women always threatened the men, "disobey us, and we shall send word to Tartary that you still live! Then shall come among you a man of Genghis Khan's issue, that Man-Child Who Was Promised! And that Man-Child shall come to command you to carry out the law of the Great Khan. He shall come to command you to carry out upon yourselves the Sending of the Sword!"

It was like the foretold coming of the Messiah. Only the Man-Child of Genghis Khan was to come, not in the role of a savior. He was to come in the awful role of a destroyer.

BECAUSE of my red hair and blue eyes, I was that Man-Child! And though I was single-handed and alone, they feared me. For the High Priestess before me was bowing her snaky tresses to the white stone of the flooring now and wailing in a kind of dread:

"O *Mopeng-Lon* of Genghis, *Toewan Baill* O Man-Child of Genghis, the Great and Good! Do not command of thy people—the Poonan—the Sending of the Sword!"

The Priests and Priestesses, the Gunner and *Mohong-Wook*, that whole stupendous assemblage before and below me—all now took up that wail. They wailed in a chant of unmistakable dread:

"O Man-Child of Genghis, the Great and Good! Do not command of thy people—the Poonan—the Sending of the Sword!"

It was the selfsame death-chant they had wailed when first I had come into that cave-temple. But I understood now the words they uttered. I understood what it was, who it was, they dreaded. They dreaded me!

I was the destroyer! I was a more dreaded destroyer to these Poonan than Siva is to the Hindoos. With a word, I could make them kill themselves. I was the destroyer! I held all these Poonan in the hollow of my hand. I could crush them; I could squeeze whatever I wanted out of them. I, William Hyde, could make them do anything, anything! I could make them give up to me their precious Green, Green God! I could make them give up to me their Goddess, even more precious to me—Golden Feather of Flame!

That was it. I would get the Green, Green God now! I would get the Golden Queen! Madness coursed like fire through my veins. I was mad with the knowledge, the absolute knowledge, of my dread power over all those wailing people. On my heels I turned. From that seventh *kliau*, I

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grabbed up the Menacing *Mandau* of Genghis Khan!

Instantly, with an abruptness that was alarming, the wailing of all those people ceased. They went silent, silent with unutterable terror. They knelt there, a thousand cold statues, silent, despairing, ready for death.

And then! Then I felt that High Priestess clinging to my knees, rising afoot by clutching my legs, my waist; snuggling up at last against my bared chest.

"*Nda, nda*, O Man-Child of Genghis!" she pleaded, her eyes begging into mine quite as Salome's must have begged into Herod's. "Do not kill all the Poonan, no, no! But if you must, if you must kill all the Poonan, let *me* live—me only—let me live! I love you, O *Toewan Raj!* I do not wish to die, for I love you, love you!"

Her arms slipped over my sword-arm and 'round the thrown-back Robe about my neck like flames of fire. The fragrance of her red, red orchid gown, of her hot breath, of her body, overpowered my senses. The warmth of her body, of her breasts pressing against my bare chest through the velvety thinness of that flowery gown, overpowered my whole being.

I thrilled through and through. My eyes looked into her eyes—eyes that were deep and hazy and entreating. My head bowed toward her tempting round red lips.

"Kiss me; ah, kiss me!" she breathed in a silky hot whisper, her form clinging warmly to mine as ivy to an oak. "Kiss me, O Man-Child, for I love you! Let me live for you! Kill all the Poonan—*ahe!* to the last child—but kiss me, only kiss me! I have a reason. Kiss me, kiss me, O Precious Jade! I will be the bride of your bosom!"

I jerked my head back. Her lips were as a scarlet poppy, her eyes gave me visions of bliss—bliss eternal as paradise! Yet I jerked my head back. She be my bride! I was insane with power, yes; but more, I was insane, now, with outraged pride.

"You!" I shouted. "You, *Lip-Plak-Tengga!* You be my bride—*Nda, nda!* In all the world no woman can be my bride save the Golden Queen!" And with my free left hand, I thrust her from me.

She clung to me—clung to me like a sleek warm cat.

"But I love you, O Man-Child!" she pleaded passionately. "Kiss me; that's all I ask—only kiss me! I will live for you. I will be the comfort of your couch. Kiss, kiss me!"

I went wild with a berserker rage. Full in her wickedly alluring face, with my open palm, I smote her. Down in a crimson heap, beneath the *kliau* of the Green, Green God, she cringed.

I leaped up. Wild with rage, with power, the heavy Robe of Holies upon my shoulders, the Menacing *Mandau* of Genghis Khan in my right hand, I leaped up and full upon the swell of that great Nine-Times-Nine Throne. Madly in the air I waved that massive sword. More madly in English, from a throat that my rage made rasping dry, I shouted down at that cringing High Priestess:

"I've got you now, you she-cat! You pulled my beard! You doubted me! But I've got you now! I've got you now!"

High on that Nine-Times Nine Throne, I stood—one ragged red-headed white man dominating, with the overmastering confidence of his kind, that vast crowd of Golden People. Then indeed was I the destroyer! Above their heads, I waved that sword of fear!

"I've got you all!" I shouted, not aware in my madness that I was shouting in English. "In the hollow of my hand, I've got you all! The Green, Green God is mine! Aye, and the Queen!"

The Poonan, of course, did not understand those words. But what they did understand was the exulting tone of those words, the threatening tone. And there was no mistaking that menacing wave of the sword!

I was exulting because the Green, Green God, and their Golden Queen seemed at last within my reach. But they did not know that. Dread of the Sending of the Sword was uppermost in their minds. They thought only that I was holding them to that Sending, to the command of death.

To them, in truth, was I the Destroyer! For there burst from them now, from each man's throat, a terrible scream. It was the scream of those who cry out against their fate, the scream of the doomed beseeching their only hope.

"O save us, *Belun-Mea Poa-Poa!*" they screamed. "Save us, save us, our Queen!"

TO BE CONTINUED

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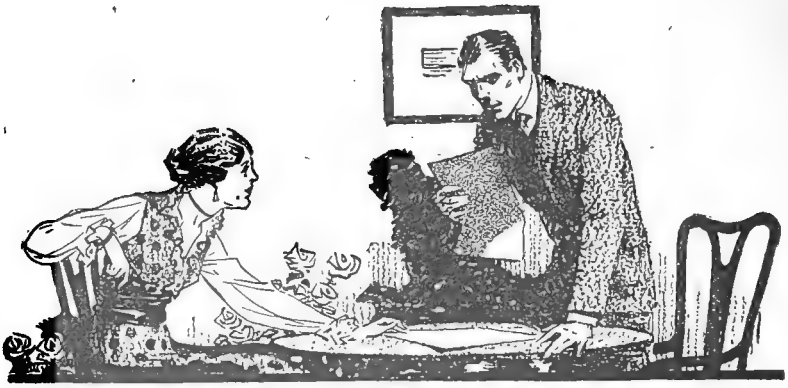

Billy Blain Eats Biscuits

By Walter Galt

Author of "Dorg's Luck," "The Return of Billy Blain," etc.

MRS. BILLY, stern resolve, and fourteen thousand dollars all combined ought to have been sufficient to keep Billy Blain from venturing his title in the ring again. But there was Terence O'Hanlon to offset those advantages.

Terence, of course, was an advantage in himself in many ways, and Billy and his wife both loved him. Nobody could have helped loving him in the old days, when the championship had first been won; then, as the guide, philosopher and friend of a retired unbeaten champion he had been greater yet, fuller of righteous pride and utterly unrighteous desire to blow Billy's trumpet for him. But now, as the sponsor for a champion who had done the impossible and had "come back," the old engineer needed handling a trifle gingerly.

It had been his fault that Billy had been forced to fight again, and Terence at the time had been ashamed of it. After the fight, though, with the laurels fresh on Billy and the fourteen thousand dollars snugly stowed away, the Irish in O'Hanlon told him that no blame can lie without corresponding responsibility.

As he put it to himself:

"There's no taxation without representation, and they taxed me with the blame. And some of it was mine. Therefore some o' the credit's mine, too. He won the fight, but I got him into it—and I'll get him into another, as sure as he's a living Sassenach. The money's good, and we've a motor business to finance."

He said nothing about his private intentions, either to Billy or his wife; but his ability to keep a secret was in inverse ratio to his exuberant good nature, and it needed no detective to discover what his intentions were.

The machine-repairing shop saw little of him, although nominally at least he was senior partner; he began to take out the new sixty-horse-power Blennerhasset, under the pretense of making better acquaintance with its working parts, and to keep company with many of the fight managers and hangers-on he had used to know in his old sea-going days. He would take them for long rides, and soak in the sunshine of their flattery.

Nor did he offer any argument or hint in opposition to their openly expressed assumption that he was still Billy's manager with full authority to pledge him as and when he chose. Most of them remembered O'Hanlon and how to handle him, and those who did not were students enough of human nature to get a line on him at once.

It soon began to leak into the papers that Billy Blain intended to hold the championship against all comers. Then challenges, genuine and otherwise, began to inundate the firm's mail box, and the sporting editors

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asked pointedly how long a champion might legitimately rest before giving the "logical challenger" a chance at him. The "logical" and most insistent challenger was Mike Connolly, whom he had just beaten, and there was more than one sporting writer who maintained that Billy ought to give Mike a return match.

Billy and his wife both had to beard O'Hanlon and explain to him that one "come-back" neither made a pugilistic career nor of necessity began one.

"I'm through with the ring," swore Billy, glancing sidewise at his wife.

"And, if you were the friend you say you are," put in little Mrs. Billy, "you'd intimate as much to all those hangers-on, who cost you a fortune every day in drinks and gasoline."

When Mrs. Billy spoke that way—she was usually sweetness itself to Terence, even in adversity—it was time, as O'Hanlon realized, to "bank his fires."

"Woman," he said, "woman, ye little know what ye're doin'. It's an awful waste o' the most terrific punch a man o' his weight ever put another man to sleep with. It's a good, clean little sportsman relegated to the d-r-rawin'-room, and it's fifty thousand dollars a year, easy, tossed to a crowd that don't deserve a nickel of it. What he ought to have for knocking the ugly blocks off 'em one by one'll go to a limping, loose-living crowd of bums that couldn't punch a hole through a derby hat. It's a shame, little woman. But I'll tell 'em, for I know ye both mean it."

And being a man of his word, Terence O'Hanlon told them.

"I'm all upset, you fellows. I'll neither drink with ye, nor take ye auto-ridin'. No. He's through. His missus says so, and he confirms it, and what the two say, goes; I can't outvote 'em. It's a shame, but it stands, and I'll say good-by to ye. I'll hide my diminished head, and attend to business."

But while Terence back in the machine shop kept his word and drove the hired hands as only he knew how to do it, the hangers-on attended, too, to their profession —which was arranging for and staging fights. There was too much easy money in the fight game—too much to be picked up from the public in the way of gate receipts, too much to be made by betting and by commissions should a fight come off, and in a hundred other ways—for them to let a champion who had once come back spend his money and his days in peace.

Clouds began to throw their shadow over Mrs. Billy's social plottings, and—far more cleverly engineered than anything O'Hanlon had ever attempted—sapping and undermining started under Billy's rampart of respectability. If they could not coax him back into the ring again, they seemed at least able to prevent his getting what he did want, hoping at last to drive him back in desperation to what he *could* do. There was not a social affair that he and his wife attended, in the stuffy little middle-class society they thought so awfully high-toned, where the stigma of pugilism was allowed to escape them. Always somebody seemed there to bring the subject up, and make Billy miserable.

But Terence O'Hanlon was the weak point, and it was on Terence that they bent their tireless energies. It was notorious that he and Billy loved each other as two men of different age seldom loved. What O'Hanlon promised, Billy would perform, unless he perished. So, they started in to try to make O'Hanlon promise.

II

"GET me a boob," advised Mike Connolly, looking dejected when, at the end of two months, no answer came to his repeated challenges. "Pick me a sucker that looks good. I'll knock him out in one round, and that'll get the crowd rootin' for me again."

But Strobinski shook his head. It was a head that had more cunning and discretion in it than could be boiled out of the accumulated brain of fifty prize-fighters—which was one reason why he chose to manage pugilists instead of fighting.

"The only guy you dare get into a ring with is the champ," he answered. "Fight a second-rater, and they'll call you a second-rater if you win. Get licked, and they'll know you're a dead 'un. Blain or nothing for you, Mike!"

"But he won't fight! We're not the only ones who've tried to make him. They're all after him, and he just won't."

"I haven't started yet," said Strobinski, looking through the window dreamily. "I manage my end each time. I've always got you fights when you were ready for

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them. I got you the last one, didn't I? You win it?"

"I wasn't trained."

"Bah! You were trained to a hair. You had your own referee, and the crowd root-in' for you, and even then you couldn't win. You didn't know enough—that's what's the matter. Get back to the gym and learn—go on! I'll make Blain fight."

So while Mike Connolly, the erstwhile champion, studied over and over again the art of hitting foul in clinches, and other technical expedients for him who does not altogether trust himself, his manager Strobinski betook himself to Harlem, to a moderate-priced apartment where a certain Mrs. Moore kept house in the odor of much sanctity.

The very first glimpse at Mrs. Moore, the first sound of her seductive voice, and the first few sentences that gentleman addressed to her, would have convinced any one who knew his intended victim that Mr. Strobinski was an artist. For, among other things, an artist is one who can choose the right materials and tools by instinct.

"I've a big, red-bearded Irishman needs leading along a bit," he began, with no attempt at circumlocution or beating about the bush.

"Not stocks again?" asked Mrs. Moore, raising her eyebrows. One gathered without exactly knowing why that she had had enough of stock transactions. The suspicion followed, in due sequence, that association with Strobinski did not always end too well financially.

"No. This time I'm sticking to my own business. It's the fight game. I know the fight game from A to Z."

She laughed—a ripple of a laugh—and her eyebrows lowered; from under them a pair of most amazing eyes betrayed illimitable curiosity, and if she were matronly and looked her best in her present pose of rather frivolous and all of forty, she had every atom of the charm that goes with a younger woman's wish to know.

"I know nothing of the fight game," she purred, resting her chin on an exquisitely molded hand, while Strobinski admitted to himself that when she took that attitude even he would have told her almost anything.

"You've no need to know anything," he answered. "Yours is the social end. Here's the point. Billy Blain is champion of the welters, but Mrs. Blain won't let him fight He's got to fight. He's got to fight my man Connolly."

"It is woman's chief prerogative to make men fight," she smiled, looking innocence itself. Her voice vaguely reminded one of cream and cowslips and a sunny afternoon, but one could believe that men had fought for her. Her eyes still betrayed nothing except curiosity.

"Mrs. Blain has got the social bug, and got it bad—thinks prize-fighters are low. They've piled up a tidy-sized wad—way up in the thousands—and they're living on it. We got 'em into a fight two months back, and all we did was to get our man licked and wish them into the auto business. Now Mrs. Blain has got the auto-business bug—thinks it's better than machine-repairing from a social point of view—and they're spending the money they won from us on making over their plant into an up-to-the-minute garage."

Mrs. Moore laughed softly, and her eyes lit from behind, like jewels masking some strange intermittent fire.

"That doesn't make it any easier, does it?"

"I wouldn't have come to you if I could have done the thing myself," snarled Strobinski. "I could fool O'Hanlon six times a day, six days a week, and the same way six times running; but Blain and his wife are on their guard, and I couldn't fool the Irishman badly enough to drag them in. That's why I've put it up to you."

MRS. MOORE laughed again, though this time Strobinski realized that it was only meant to disconcert him. He suspected that underneath the mirth she was more than a little puzzled, and he began to feel more comfortable himself in consequence.

"How much?" she asked. She seemed to anticipate his answer. Doubtless the price would be far beneath her consideration.

"You mean, how much is there in it for you?"

"Indeed, no! I mean, how much do you stand to make out of it?"

Strobinski winced, almost imperceptibly.

"I didn't think of working this on a commission basis."

"No?"

"No. I thought of offering a flat price, contingent, and no exes."

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"Contingent? Contingent on what exactly?"

"On Billy Blain, or O'Hanlon for him, signing articles to fight and posting a five-thousand-dollar forfeit."

"My price would be five thousand," she answered promptly.

"Cents?" sneered Strobinski.

"I'm not joking. Five thousand, or else twenty-five per cent. of what you get. As you said just now, you wouldn't have come to me if you could turn the trick yourself. Take it or leave it."

"Two thousand five hundred!" said Strobinski, with an air of absolute finality.

"Six thousand!" answered Mrs. Moore, with a rather metallic ring in her voice that had been absent hitherto.

"Say, look here, Mary——"

"Mrs. Moore!"

"Well—Mrs. Moore—I'll make it three thousand, but not another cent. Why, I've got to settle with Mike, and I want something for myself."

"Twenty-five per cent., then—I'll risk it."

"No. Three thousand, flat."

"Seven thousand!" answered Mrs. Moore. And after that, each time he argued she increased her price, realizing perfectly that he had only come to her as an absolutely last resource, and with the quick perception that was her stock in trade, appreciating to the full the financial possibilities of bringing back a man like Billy Blain into the ring. She understood the art of betting, among other things, and knew that Strobinski did too.

"Five thousand dollars!" she insisted when he invited her to come down to earth again; and in the end Strobinski gave in and agreed.

"You get busy, an' learn some new tricks!" he advised his charge, Mike Connolly, that evening. "If this affair comes off, there'll be overhead charges to beat anything we ever carried yet. We've got to win, and win a pot of money. Get wise—get good and wise! Think more o' tricks than punchin'."

III

AFTER all, why should Terence O'Hanlon remain a bachelor? The condition had been reasonable enough in the old days when he went to sea as ship's engineer; and later, when he left the sea and managed Billy, he had been too busy getting in and out of trouble to have time for any sort of luxuries.

But, when Billy married, when O'Hanlon came to live with them, when little Mrs. Billy managed things until neither man remembered what discomfort was; with prosperity increasing, and an atmosphere of married life on every hand, Terence O'Hanlon began, so to speak, to ripen. When a matrimonial possibility dawned bright on his horizon, he was ready for it.

He did not care to consider how old he was, and no one else knew. His engineer's certificate might have given up the truth, had it not been hidden somewhere in the bottom of a ditty box, but he was not the sort of man whose age mattered. He appeared to be of a Terence O'Hanlon age, and stayed there. And the lady seemed utterly indifferent on the subject; she seemed no more to dream of asking him how old he might be than he did of daring to ask her the same question.

Her credentials were unquestioned from the start, for Mrs. Billy introduced her, and in these later days it had come to be agreed among them that Mrs. Billy's verdict on what was or was not socially right should stand. Mrs. Moore had met Mrs. Billy at the Dudelsteins', and that in itself was ground enough for nursing her acquaintance—for the Dudelsteins were the social apex of Mrs. Billy's set.

Mrs. Moore, however, had needed little nursing. With that educated skill that is the hall mark of the class we all aspire to and never, never reach, she led Mrs. Billy on from confidence to confidence until the greatest secret of all was bare at last and they knew that their regard was mutual. Then, deftly and so lightly that no one's feelings could ever have been hurt, Mary Moore (they called each other by their first names by this time) began to hint of social worlds away and away higher up, to which the Dudelsteins were but a threshold. Without a word of bombast, or a hint of patronage or pride, she offered introductions; and she offered them as though they were Mrs. Billy's due.

What more natural than that Mrs. Billy should decree that Billy and O'Hanlon wash themselves and, with much murmuring and side-twisting of the lower jaw, put on high collars and a Sunday suit apiece? What more certain than that the three should

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step one afternoon from the firm's sixty-horse-power Blennerhasset, and take the elevator up to Mrs. Moore's?

And after all, however far the Irish roam, and under whatever circumstances they may bear the brunt of politics and rule in foreign lands, an Irishman will always love an Irishwoman best. He may—and often does—marry a woman of another race, but his heart stays true to Ireland. The other thing is politics.

Mary Moore was Irish to the finger-tips, and she took no trouble to disguise the fact from Terence. She let him talk about himself, and there is no surer way than that of winning a man's regard. She encouraged him to talk of Billy, and of prize-fights, and took unbelievable interest in the bloodsome details of a dozen or more scraps, even remembering them, and recalling them in future conversations. As Terence vowed, she was a wonder of a woman.

From dressing grudgingly, and steering the auto unwillingly toward her street, O'Hanlon descended (as Billy called it) or ascended (as he called it) to calling regularly for a talk. Later, he would take her auto-riding; and when the firm purchased two small runabouts as part of the stock in trade, O'Hanlon pretended to believe the widow was a possible purchaser, and took her for endless trips.

Before long Strobinski grew impatient. He knew that Terence nowadays was comfortably fixed, and that if Mrs. Moore should take it into her contriving head to marry the ex-engineer she not only could do it, but she could make something like fifteen or twenty thousand dollars into the bargain, instead of the five thousand he himself had offered. He called, and remonstrated.

"What does a clever woman such as you want to marry a maniac like him for?" he demanded. But she only smiled exasperatingly.

"Is your man in training?" she asked him.

"I'm afraid he'll be overtrained, unless you hurry."

"Have you got five thousand dollars ready, with which to pay me?"

"Of course I have."

"And another five thousand, to cover their forfeit money?"

"Yes."

"Got some more to bet with?"

"What are you driving at, Mary?"

"Mrs. Moore, please."

"Well—what's your game, Mrs. Moore?"

"Have you got any more money, over and above that ten thousand, to bet with?"

"Sure."

"Will you bet with me?"

"About what?"

"Will you bet me two thousand five hundred dollars, at even money, that there won't be a fight— I mean that Billy Blain won't agree to fight?"

"Why should I?"

"Suit yourself!" smiled Mrs. Moore, and Mr. Strobinski experienced at once the disagreeable sensation colloquially known as cold feet. He realized that he was being forced.

"I'll bet you that much," he said after a few moments' reflection, "at even money."

"You'll remember, now," she purred, "that when you argued I told you my price would be seven thousand five hundred—but you wouldn't believe me then. You needn't bet unless you like, but if you don't bet there won't be any fight. At a word from me, they would——"

"The bet is on!" said Max Strobinski, taking out a pocket memorandum book, and writing in it.

"Then, what you'd better do," said Mrs. Moore, "is to go and draw up articles, or whatever you call them, for the fight, and bring them here to me, so that I have them ready for the right moment. When the time comes, I'll very likely need them in a hurry."

And Strobinski, with a vow that he would not call on Mary Moore again, for it cost too much, went off to the office of a man who made a specialty of drawing fight agreements.

"ARRANGE for a five-thousand-dollar forfeit, to be posted by either side," he instructed. "Leave the names blank."

"Sounds like a championship fight," hazarded the pseudo-legal gentleman.

"You 'tend to your own business!" advised Strobinski. "Five thousand dollars to be bet by each at even money, and to be posted the day before the fight. Motion-picture money to be evenly divided, and the same way with the fighters' end of the gate receipts. Fifty, fifty—get me?"

"I get you," said he of the pens and

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parchment; and an hour later Strobinski left his office with a blank agreement that provided against all possible contingencies.

"There won't be much in it for Mike and me, after we've settled with Mary Moore, there won't," he soliloquized, as he walked away. "Phew! Seven thousand five hundred—it's a stiff price! Say, five or six thousand for us, countin' the movie money and the gate—if we win. If we lose—Lord! It's an awful risk to take! If we win, it doesn't matter, 'cause Mike'll be champion again, with all the free advertisin' in the world; but if we lose he'll not only be a has-been champ, who can't come back—we'll be pretty nearly all but broke into the bargain!"

After ten minutes' reflection in that vein he drew the contract from his pocket, and stepped into a café to peruse it. It was the last clause that seemed most to interest him, and he read it two or three times. It ran:

"Either party to this contract shall, on the day before the date agreed on for the fight, post with the official stakeholder and bet the sum of five thousand dollars, each against the other, the money to be forfeited by either side not putting in an appearance at ten o'clock of the night agreed on, in addition to all other forfeits named in this agreement."

"If he were there on time, he *might* win," thought Strobinski with himself. "But if he weren't he'd lose ten thousand anyhow, and we'd get it. What's more, he'd almost have to fight on another date, if only to try for that ten thousand back! We've got to fight him some time or another, or quit the fight game; but, I guess we can take our time, and I'd sooner pay Mary Moore with their money!"

He looked considerably happier as he rode back to Mrs. Moore's; and it was noticeable after that that Mike Connolly did not overexert himself while training. He gave out he was overtrained.

IV

THEY rather encouraged O'Hanlon to fall in love with Mary Moore, and he was by no means backward, so it made matters much more difficult for Mrs. Billy when her friends—and Mrs. Dudelstein among them—began to warn her, with many nods and dark hints. If she had not been the guiding spirit from the first, if she had not compelled O'Hanlon to call on Mrs. Moore in the first instance, it would have been infinitely easier to warn O'Hanlon when the time came.

As it was, she took the best course and put matters up to Billy; and that little fire-eater took the only course he ever could see—the straight one—and waded into Terence without any further to-do.

"She's a crook, Terence. Quit while the quitting's good!"

"Ye little runt, I wouldn't take that from any other living man; and I'll not take it from *you* twice. Take it back, d'ye hear! She's my promised wife. I think the world of her."

"Are you and I friends, Terence?"

"I am, anyway—you suit yourself."

"Would I do you a wrong?"

"I'd bet all I have ye wouldn't."

"She's a crook, Terence. Mrs. Blain says so."

"Maybe Mrs. Blain is wrong."

"I'll bet on her until I know she's wrong," said Billy. "How far has this thing gone, Terence?"

"How d'ye mean—how far? She's promised, and I'm doing the square thing."

"Square thing?"

"Marriage settlement."

"Signed it?"

"Sure. Yesterday. Contracted to settle all I have on her in front of witnesses, and insured my life in her favor. Only decent thing a man can do. Suppose I were to die first, she'll be all right."

"Um! Settle your share in the business on her too?"

"Sure thing! Settled everything."

"Dating from——?"

"The day she marries me."

"Terence——"

"Speak up, son."

"If I prove she's a crook, will you listen?"

With any other man, O'Hanlon would have been fighting for his life by this time, for his was not the temper or the training that leads a man to tolerate the least imputation against the woman of his choice. And O'Hanlon believed in fighting as the surest remedy for injured pride and wrongs of every kind. But Billy Blain was different; he loved him better than a son—loved him best, in fact, when he was taking liberties.

"I'll listen while ye try to prove it!" he answered, half amused. "Ye might as well

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try to prove black's white—but go ahead!"

"If I prove she's a crook, will you call the marriage off?"

"Son, if she were a crook, she'd sue me."

"Well?"

"It 'ud be a very strong case she'd have, and a very weak one I'd have! I had the lawyer fix things purposely so that whatever happened to me they couldn't deprive her of anything. They're settled on her tight."

"But she hasn't got 'em yet! I'm off, Terence, d'ye hear? I'm off to prove she's a crook, and if I do prove it I'll stand by you—d'ye get that? You wait here, you great elephant, and don't go blundering in while I'm trying to fix things. Wait here till I come back—d'ye hear?"

"I'll give ye all the rope ye want, my son. Ye'll be able to prove nothing, so what's the odds?"

"All right," said Billy, and with tight lips and squared shoulders he set off on the least tasteful adventure he had ever undertaken.

Of tact he had little, but he could sweat his temper; he had learned that trick in many an uphill fight; and he could go straight to the point, which is more than many men can do; that theory that tact consists in indirectness has ruined more good plans than any other cause. And, even though it was a woman that he had to face, and a clever one, he had plenty of confidence; what will win ring fights for a should-be-beaten man will carry him through feminine entanglements as well. He was of the sturdy type that can not believe he can be beaten. He did not like his job; but he went to it as he would have gone to wood-chopping on a cold morning, had he had to—with a will, and the determination to get it over quickly.

So Mary Moore, who had expected Mrs. Billy and a female, possibly tearful, and surely acrimonious argument, was taken by surprise. Billy did not shake hands, or waste the usual time in admiration of her furniture and pictures. He came straight to the issue, sitting on the very verge of an upright chair, and hiding his clenched fists underneath his hat; for he clenched them by instinct when a fight of any kind was on.

"Engaged to Terence?"

"Yes." There was no room for equivocation.

"Got it in writing?"

"Yes." No room again!

"Witnessed?"

"Yes."

"Lawyer draw it up?"

"Yes."

Mary Moore realized that what she schemed for was now hers beyond the shadow of a doubt. She had her victim within four walls in front of her, and he had no means of squirming free. But she had never in her life been more uncomfortable. Unwittingly she began to realize how Billy's antagonists occasionally felt when he fixed his eyes on them in a twenty-four-foot ring. She could only answer him in monosyllables.

"Got the papers in your own possession?"

"Yes."

"Well— Mrs. Blain and I have heard things. We haven't told Terence yet, but we will, and he won't marry you— I'll answer for that. What's your price?"

That was direct enough. Mrs. Moore had now exactly what she went into the game for; yet, if any woman ever won without enjoyment, she did. Billy's gray eyes were two steely points that did not waver, but looked through and through her; they gave her no chance to save her face, or equivocate, or stall, or play for time. She had to accept the part of crook found out, and make the most of it.

"Since you want to be so businesslike," she answered; "since insults seem to be your only weapon, and you evidently want to quarrel, I may as well admit that I have got Terence O'Hanlon on what is known as toast. There are no witnesses here. I don't mind telling you between ourselves that I deliberately intended from the first to get as much of Mr. O'Hanlon's money as the law would let me have. He is a boob who should be plucked properly, and you, Mr. Blain, are another!"

"Name your price," said Billy, and for a moment Mrs. Moore was sorely tempted to fix a cash sum down, and have done with the whole business. She had little doubt but that Billy would consent to pay her quite as much as Strobinski had offered, and she would be surer of getting paid. But either a stray and sporadic sense of loyalty, or else a perverted love of sport came to her assistance, and she drew a parchment from a drawer in the table where she sat.

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"If you will sign here," she smiled, passing the document to him, "I will give you back all the papers Terence O'Hanlon signed. I can get my money just as well one way as the other."

Billy glanced down the well-remembered form of articles for a ten-round fight. He raised his eyebrows at the forfeit clauses, and at the clause which called for a half division of the picture money and the gate receipts. As champion he had a right to two-thirds of them at least, but he realized that he was in something of a corner.

"Who's the other man?" he asked, with curiosity.

"Mike Connolly."

"Return match?"

She nodded, and Billy began to smile in a way she could not understand.

"Call in a witness or two," he said, producing a fountain pen and shaking it.

In less than five minutes, two gentlemen who seemed to understand exactly what was required of them were at hand; they seemed to have been waiting in the opposite apartment, and by the merest coincidence in the world to know all about fight-articles, and to know the different parties to the agreement. Billy signed his name, filling in Mike Connolly's wherever necessary, and they witnessed it.

"I'll post my five thousand the minute he does," he promised. "Now, give me back O'Hanlon's papers."

Mrs. Moore folded up the fight agreement, and then passed him back the marriage contract. Billy read it twice, and tore it deliberately down the middle.

"Now we're quits," he smiled. "I've something else to show you. See here."

He drew a sealed envelope from an inner pocket, and tore it open. There was a stamp on it, but it had not been mailed. He passed it to her, and watched her face with quiet amusement while she read. It was a letter to Mike Connolly, promising to fight ten rounds with him on almost any date he cared to name.

"THAT was going in the mail today," said Billy. "Mrs. Blain and I had talked it over, and we came to the conclusion that if Mike wanted another licking so badly, and was game to put his money up, we'd accommodate him. We needed some more capital for the auto business."

Mary Moore suppressed the rage that swept over her. It took all the acting she could own to, but she managed it. To a schemer, there is no such enraging situation as hers; failure is less mortifying than the knowledge that the scheming has been all for something that did not need scheming for, and that sudden proof that she had thrown away her contract with O'Hanlon was enough to deprive her of the power of speech. But she called on all her reserve of will, and hid her rage from Billy. And as quickly as a panther claws back at its enemy, she conceived a plan for getting even.

"Pooh!" she smiled. "You'll be beaten. You beat him last time by a fluke."

"Think so?" Billy could afford to be amused. Her opinion did not trouble him.

"I know it. So do you!"

"Yes?"

"You daren't bet! I'll bet you five thousand dollars at even money that you don't beat him—you daren't take it!"

"I won't!" said Billy. "I wouldn't bet with a woman if the alternative were jail. I wouldn't bet more than a pair of gloves with any woman, and I wouldn't bet even that much with you. Good afternoon!"

He walked out as he had come in, abruptly; and half an hour later he handed back Terence his agreement just as abruptly.

"There you are, you great elephant!" he grinned at him. "You're a free man again, and I've signed articles. Arrange a mortgage—that's your business; we'll need ten thousand anyhow — better raise twenty thousand, and bet all you can on me. We'll make a killing this time. Then come and help me train—that'll help you forget the woman! She's a crook all right; she named her price, and I paid her. You're free, man—d'ye get me? Free!"

V

THERE was more than mere elation in the camp of Strobinski and Mike Connolly; there was an atmosphere of certainty that was enjoyed as well by Mrs. Moore. When that good lady had determined on a course of action, the mere refusal of a fighting-man was not enough to stop her. She got wind, through diligent inquiry, of the fact that Terence O'Hanlon was going the round of the fight clubs,

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betting the firm's money on Billy Blain—at evens when he could get it, but laying odds when he had to. So, through an agent of her own, she bet heavily against Billy.

She expressly stipulated that the betting was to be with O'Hanlon, even if her agent were obliged to concede a point or two of odds; the money, she insisted, was to be posted in advance by either side, and the memorandum of the bet, lodged with the stakeholder, was worded by herself. The bet she made through her agent was that Billy Blain would not beat Mike Connolly, and O'Hanlon—not knowing whom he bet with—wagered Billy would beat him. That meant that Billy had to knock out Connolly or lose, so even though Mrs. Moore laid nine thousand to five thousand, the Irishman was running risks.

O'Hanlon reported the bet, of course, in the home camp, and quite naturally Billy pricked his ears at the information.

"Who d'you suppose is laying nine to five against me?" he wondered. "You were an ass to take that bet, Terence; but even if we lose it, even if I fail to knock him out, it'll maybe be a good thing."

"How d'ye mean? I'll call any bet I've made mine, if the firm don't want it," declared O'Hanlon.

"I mean this. The bet's a big one. No outsider would bet that much, and no insider who had bet that much would want me to get into the ring. Remember? Once or twice, they've tried to keep me out of a fight. We'll be on our guard."

"Against whom in particular?" wondered Terence, thoroughly convinced of Billy's acumen in fighting matters, and anxious only to be told whom he should kill. "I'm always gettin' ye into trouble, sonny, but I'll not save myself anything. Who d'ye suppose is the enemy?"

"Mary Moore!" said Billy promptly. "She'll want to knock me out of business at the first opportunity. Strobinski, on the other hand, won't want me knocked out until the day before the fight, when the final forfeit's posted. He'd rather have ten thousand to the good than five. Until the day before the fight, we'll have only Mary Moore to deal with; from then on, for twenty-four hours or so, we've got to guard against her and Strobinski combined, and they'll be desperate."

"I don't believe it of her!" swore O'Hanlon; but Billy laughed, and took precautions.

He went into training at a distance, and not even the reporters could discover where he was, for he changed his mind about O'Hanlon; he left the Irishman behind to answer questions and toss scraps of comfort to the press, and Terence was nearly frantic by the day before the fight, tormented beyond endurance by a swarm of men who dogged his every movement. They tried to steal the letters from his pocket, and to grab them before they reached the mail; they tried to make him drunk, and they even threatened him, and tried to bribe him. But Terence was just one too many for them; Billy remained undiscovered, and arrived in New York again the day before the appointed date, looking fitter than he ever had done in his life.

That evening O'Hanlon posted the second forfeit of five thousand dollars, against Strobinski's wager of a like amount, and on the way home he dropped in to a drugstore to buy some biscuits of a kind that Billy liked to train on. He noticed that he was followed into the store by a man who watched him closely, but he did not wait to hear the man buy a similar box of biscuits.

He was not surprised, he was only annoyed, to find the same man with him in the subway later on; and he spent about two minutes wondering what the fellow hoped to gain by dogging him. All the same, he did not fall off his guard, and when the box of biscuits slipped from underneath his arm he pounced on it too quickly for the other man to forestall him. He did not notice the exactly similar box beneath the other fellow's arm.

It was Mrs. Billy who opened the box of biscuits, and she noticed nothing. She was rather too miserable at the thought of having to attend to a bleeding warrior next evening to take much notice of trifling details. It was Billy who detected something wrong.

"Box open when you bought it?" he asked Terence.

"No. Sealed up."

"Then some one's monkeyed with it since. See here. The paper's always folded underneath each biscuit, and then up between them. Run out and buy another box, and I'll show you. Oh—and Terence, phone for Doctor Knowles while you're about it. It'll look well, and he knows how to hold his tongue."

"Sonny, those biscuits *must* be all right.

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I bought 'em—I carried 'em—they never left my hand."

"Not once?"

"I dropped 'em for a second in the subway, but——"

"Good enough! Go and fetch Doc Knowles!"

The doctor hardly troubled himself even to smell the biscuits.

"Sure, they're poisoned!" he said. "They wouldn't have killed you, but if you'd eaten half of one of them you'd have been sick for a week—too sick by a long way to fight. Who brought 'em home?"

Terence admitted that the shame was his, and the doctor stared hard at him for a minute, until Billy noticed.

"Doc," he said; "d'you want to know who the one man is besides myself who couldn't do it?"

"Oh!" said the doctor. "I understand. Beg pardon. Is that all you wanted me for?"

"No. Give out, please, that I ate the biscuit and was poisoned. I want Terence to take you in the auto lickety-split to the nearest drug-store; if you get arrested for speeding, so much the better. Make up a prescription that'll tip the druggist and every one who asks him what's the matter—poison. Then race back. And, doctor—if you want something over and above your ordinary fee, get down-town afterward and bet on me for tomorrow. If the other side weren't afraid, they wouldn't risk this dope game. Bet all you've got!"

The doctor stepped into the game like an actor called to fill an unexpected part, and acted better than he very likely would have done had he been primed and rehearsed for weeks in advance. Within fifteen minutes the news was all about New York that Billy Blain had been taken sick on the eve of the expected fight for the championship; and within another hour the sporting editors were typing out a dozen different theories, not least strongly held of which was that Billy Blain was well enough, but had cold feet at the last moment. When Doctor Knowles strolled into a sport club and essayed to bet on Billy Blain, he was offered no less odds than five to one, and he snapped them up to the tune of a thousand dollars.

"Against whom am I betting?" he asked the man who said he was an agent, and who proved it by lodging five thousand dollars with the club stakeholder.

"Against a lady," said the agent cryptically. "And, believe me, she's Irish!" he added with a grin. "Not green—yellow; all to the mustard. North of Sligo! You kiss that roll of yours good-by!"

VI

ALL the gang felt positive—Mike Connolly, the Strobinskis, Mary Moore, and every hanger-on who stood to win a hundred dollars on the fight. Mike Connolly had never been a fighter known as "absolutely on the level;" when he showed confidence, his crowd knew there was something shady in the game. And Connolly always did win in the shade. They clustered to the hall in hundreds, smiling and expectant.

Mary Moore—as sure as any of them, for had she not devised the biscuit plan—had too much in the balance to be able to keep far away that evening of the fight. She had bet every nickel of the price Strobinski had paid her and a lot besides on Connolly, and on terms to suit herself; should the impossible take place and Billy win, she would be practically penniless—which is worse than owing money. So, in spite of certainty—in spite of reason, and the published news of Billy's sickness, and the betting odds—she took up a position in a rather doubtful restaurant not far away from the hall where the fight was to take place. There she arranged a little supper party, at which she meant to announce later that she had won some twenty thousand dollars; and the first sensation she experienced that evening otherwise than gay was when a guest of hers announced that he had seen O'Hanlon and Billy Blain go in through the rear door of the fight-hall.

"Was Blain looking ill?" she asked, with a slight catch in her breath.

"Looked fit as I've ever seen him."

"Are you sure it was Billy Blain?"

"Positive. I've seen him fight a dozen times. Saw him win his first fight on this side of the water. I'd know him in a million."

Mrs. Moore's spirits began to dampen from that moment, but that was nothing to the feeling of depression that brooded over Connolly's corner of the ring. There the would-be champion sat, gleefully expectant. Before ten o'clock he and his crowd were sure that somebody would come from Billy's

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camp, and call the fight off; but, instead of the expected messenger came Billy, closely followed by O'Hanlon.

And, feeling as he did, fitter than he ever had done, how could Billy even pretend that he was sick?

He stripped, and showed his muscles to the crowd, and the benches rose and roared at him. The satin skin shone smooth and clean above hard-molded sinews that a gladiator would have envied, and the glint in his gray eyes, the humorous flicker in the corners of his mouth, the poise, and spring, and youth, and courage all declared him winner before the fight was under way.

The men weighed at the ringside, as agreed, and Billy made the weight with something less than half an ounce to spare. The other man was shy two ounces of flesh and at least a ton of pluck. There was a lot of whispering over in his corner, when the referee had finished talking to them and they were waiting for the call of time. It was evident that they were desperate.

"Look out, sonny!" advised O'Hanlon. "They'll be up to tricks! The referee's on the level this time, but they're not. Look out for yourself!"

"Keep a sharp eye on the bottle," cautioned Billy, "and the towel, too."

Then he raised his voice, and pitched it in a key that would surely carry over to Mike Connolly's corner.

"Claim any kind of foul!" he ordered.

And O'Hanlon, climbing back through the ropes, roared out—

"You bet I will!"

"Yah!" roared the other side. "That's the way cheese-champions hold titles—claiming fouls!"

"Time!" called the time-keeper; and Billy skipped into the middle of the ring.

He seemed disposed to let the fight go all the way, for he started by sparring lightly, showing off his skill and treating the fans to an exhibition they had not seen in many a day. Whichever way Mike turned and dodged and twisted, a glove seemed there to intercept him; and whenever Mike let loose one of his tigerish swings, there was nothing in between his glove and the horizon. Billy side-stepped with remarkable agility for a man who had been poisoned. The first round ended very much in Billy's favor, but on points alone; there had been no particular damage done, except that Mike had tired himself a bit and lost his temper.

"Get in and clinch, and hustle him!" advised Mike's seconds in the minute interval.

"Look out for him, sonny!" counseled Terence. "Remember, you've got to knock him out to win that bet. Better not waste time!"

But Billy seemed disposed to smile and amuse himself, and at the call of time he sprang to the center of the ring again on tiptoe, sparring as before.

Mike Connolly remembered what his seconds told him. At the sound of the gong he rushed right in, with his head a little low, and tried to gather Billy's arms in a bunch while he wrestled closer. Upper-cut after upper-cut chop-chopped against his jaw, but he stuck to it, and in less than half a minute they were locked together, waltzing sideways, Billy trying to break clear and Mike struggling to hang on.

"Break!" said the referee. "Break, you men!" And Billy tried to. Mike held on, head down; and suddenly he straightened. It was a thoroughly well studied piece of fouling, and so cleverly attempted that it missed the notice of a perfectly efficient referee.

O'Hanlon, leaning with his elbows on the platform in Billy's corner, spotted it, and roared a claim of foul. Mike's seconds bellowed abuse and scorn, and the fight went on. From a cut in Billy's forehead the blood ran down in streams into his eyes, and a little patch of red on Mike's forehead showed whence the cut had come. The referee saw fit to caution Mike, but by that time Billy was backing 'round and 'round the ring, blinded by his own blood, guarding blindly, hitting back wildly in the hope of landing one by luck, and hanging on desperately, more by pluck and stamina than skill. Mike Connolly was raining punches on him.

At the call of time he could do little more than stagger to his corner, and the buzz from Mike's end of the ring gave evidence that his contingent was something more than satisfied. O'Hanlon had no time for advice or argument. There were less than sixty seconds in which to restore vision to a useless eye, as well as stanch a flow of blood. He pulled out a pocket-knife, and performed an operation that is not nice to watch, that is even less nice to submit to, but that is wondrously efficacious.

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It is awfully unpleasant to perform, and he was so busy spitting blood out afterward that he had hardly time to add a word or two of counsel.

"Guard your face, now!" he advised Billy, as the gong announced the beginning of round three. "Don't let him get blood on his gloves, and don't let him start your forehead bleeding again. And mark this! Put him out without wasting another minute!"

The advice, though, had not been necessary, as O'Hanlon would have known if he had caught one glimpse of Billy's face as he left his corner.

He went in as a leopard goes, crouching stealthily, all tight-sprung courage and determination; and Mike's seconds realized with a long-drawn "Ah-h-h!" of disappointment that round number two had not accomplished all they hoped. Their man was doomed, and they knew it—though they yelled advice to him. The fans knew it, and yelled too.

Amid a din that seemed a solid wall of sound, Billy seemed to wake into a many-handed whirlwind, that toyed with Mike as though he were a straw. The punches—the slaps that had been in round one—snapped off him now with a shock that sent him reeling. Beautifully, scientifically, quickly, Billy worked him until his head went back, back, back, and his hands went down, down, lower down; until twenty-five seconds before the call of time a straight punch landed on Mike's lower jaw, and the count of doom tolled out across the ring—the "Eight, nine, ten, he's out!"

THAT evening, as O'Hanlon counted hundred-dollar bills out into Mrs. Billy's lap, a ring came at the door, and a minute later the maid announced that Mrs. Moore desired a moment's interview.

"I'll see her!" said Mrs. Billy, and though the other two objected, she piled the money up in a heap on the table and had her own way about it.

Mrs. Moore was veiled, and she did not lift the veil to show what marks disaster might have made on her. Her voice betrayed enough.

"You've won!" she said quietly, and for all its quietness she managed to contrive a world of pathos in her tone. "Are you satisfied to know that about half the money's mine?"

"It's won fairly!" said Mrs. Billy.

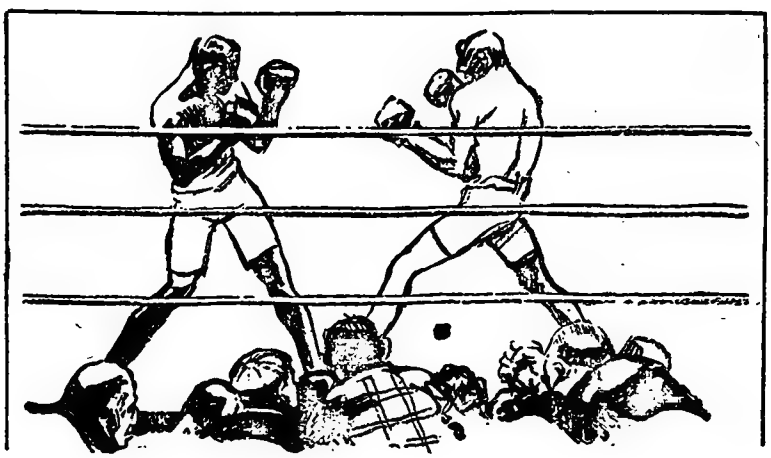
"I don't deny it."

"And you tried to cheat!"

"I don't deny that either. But I'm broke—stark, stony-broke. I want a hundred dollars."

Mrs. Billy left the room, had a hurried word with Billy, and returned.

"Here's five hundred!" she said, holding out the money. "It's worth that much to have Terence single. Billy would have won anyhow, so we owe you nothing on his account. Now go! Good night!"



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A Gentleman Ranker

Author of "Lieutenant Tony Mallagh," "Oil at San Nicolas," etc.

ONE warm afternoon in early Summer Sergeant Hibbert and I sat side by side on the grass-grown slope of the Portsdown Hills. Beneath us lay the red-brick village of Cosham, fields of young corn, clumps of dark-green trees, the high road stretching east and west, farms and white cottages and the blue of the English Channel.

Sergeant Hibbert, deep-chested and sunburned, knocked the ashes out of his pipe against his heel and smiled at what I had just been saying.

"Very good, sir," said he; "then take that place yonder!"

He waved his hand in the direction of Portsea Island spread out like a map before us with its jumble of houses and churches and breweries, and the war-ships in the harbor shrouded in a faint dun-colored pall of smoke.

"Take that place yonder, and tell me truthfully how many youngsters there are in Portsmouth this minute who wouldn't be all the better for a year with the colors! From nineteen to twenty, say; learnin' to obey orders an' handle a rifle!

"It's goin' to hurt 'em, is it? How? What way can it hurt 'em? I suppose it don't hurt 'em to hang around street corners night after night, as they do now, smokin' cheap fags an' drinkin' cheap beer an' talkin' cheap talk?

"What use are they to themselves or their betters? What kind of men will them pale-faced, narrer-shouldered boys make—boys who 'aven't got no interest in anything except to go out an' watch the football at Fratton Park of a Saturday afternoon?

"No, sir, an' them ain't the only ones. I've thought of this often an' often. It's the young chaps that 'as money an' goes to Oxford an' Cambridge! Put *them* in the same company in a line regiment with ninety-nine other youngsters, factory an' mill 'ands, mechanics, artisans, 'ooligans.

"Is it goin' to do them any 'arm? If it does, then they don't deserve to think themselves better than other people; they're not. If they win out an' show themselves men, why then they are men an' no one can say they're not."

Here I said something under my breath, and Sergeant Hibbert turned on me swiftly.

"What's that? Yes sir, as good as any; none better—also a hundred times worse. But listen to this: if a gentleman ranker wants to get 'is commission 'e's got to be not only as good at soldierin' as the rest of us; 'e must be a —— sight better.

"An' that's where so many of 'em goes wrong. A youngster what enlists, imaginin' that things are goin' to be made easy just because his dad could send him to Eton or 'Arrow or any of them places, is goin' to 'ave more trouble on 'is 'ands than he knows what to do with.

"An' there's 'eaps of simpler things in this old world than tryin' to earn a commission through the ranks. A man who can do

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that—well, he's done something to be proud of as long as he lives an' to have put up on 'is gravestone when he dies. But Lord Almighty! How many have I seen, joinin' the ranks, workin' 'ard for six months or a year maybe, an' then give up—broken? Good boys, some of 'em, too."

Sergeant Hibbert chewed at a piece of grass and for some moments was silent, staring with inscrutable countenance at an army service corps wagon, drawn by two brown horses, slowly descending the hill into Cosham.

"There was a feller once who joined the Battalion about six months after I did——"

Again Sergeant Hibbert paused, but by his manner I knew that there would be more to follow.

"Did he get his commission?" I asked. "Well, why didn't he?"

Sergeant Hibbert chuckled.

"If you must have it, why then you must. It's a queer kind of a yarn from start to finish, an' it shows—in a way—what I was talkin' about."

HE JOINED the Battalion in the Spring of ninety-three, an' some'ow or other we were friends from the very start. A tall, thin young chap he was, with fair hair an' a don't-care look in his eyes.

An' his name?

"Another bloomin' gentleman!" says Ginger Williams, who was in the same room with him an' me.

"I'm not," says he, "an' if I was, what the devil does it matter to you?"

Got his shirt out in no time, he did. Ginger just laughs.

"All right, Duke!" says he. "No offense."

An' we called him the Duke from then on; never anything but that.

Takin' it all 'round, the Duke got on with the crowd a sight better than most rookies. He did his work, which was the chief thing, without grumblin' or chasin' around after the flag for 'elp. He kept his mouth shut an' his chin up, but I think on the whole he had less idea what the army really was than—well, than a cab'net minister.

He was so very helpless in some ways, the Duke, an' drillin' an' marchin' an' musketry don't make up all what a private of the Line has to learn. He'd never even heard of pipe-clay or a button brass; an' as for usin' 'em! Lord! His recruits' drill must 'ave taught him a bit more besides the slope from the order.

"It's bad enough," says 'e one evenin' after we'd been on fatigue together in the officers' mess, "'avin' to scrub an' black-lead in my own room; but," says 'e, "why should we 'ave to wash dishes for those fellers just because they wear sashes over their left shoulders, an' swords?"

An' then he grins.

"But some day," he says, "I'll be in the officers' mess myself. Others have done it; why not me?" An' he gets quite cheerful.

That was the Duke all over; one minute so gloomy you'd think life wasn't worth livin' an' the next as happy as a Colonel of Yeomanry at a field-day when not more than 'arf 'is reg'ment 'as been unhorsed in a charge.

But with all his talk the Duke never so much as breathed a word as to what 'ad brought him into the ranks. Not a word. There's generally some good reason, one way or another, an' you generally find it out before very long. In the Duke's case, I put it down as money, per'aps, or a row at 'ome, or trouble of some kind.

But one thing I knew; he wasn't a private soldier on account of not bein' able to pass his exam into Sandhurst. He wasn't stupid, whatever else he was. And as soon as ever he was a proper duty man and finished with 'is recruits' drill he set about gettin' 'is certificates, without which he couldn't be given his stripes. An' he decided to take his first-class, as well as his second; includin' tactics, topography, fortification an' everything else they could teach him.

I don't think the Duke ever so much as put 'is foot inside the canteen.

"If I begin that," says 'e, "I'm done. I know what I can do, an' what I can't do."

An' that gave me a hint, or so I thought, of what he'd been up against before he enlisted.

Wherever you get a crowd of men, soldiers or sailors or civilians even, there's bound to be things happenin', though as a gen'ral rule life in a garrison town ain't any more excitin' than it is anywhere else. An' what with field-trainin' in the Long Valley an' over the Fox 'Ills, an' musketry at Ash, an' route-marchin' 'round Farnham an' Camberley an' Blackwater, also parades an' reviews, we'd plenty to do without panickin' about excitement.

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Promotion was quick in the battalion at that time, owin' to foreign drafts and time-expired sergeants, an' in about nine months from the day he joined, the Flag recommended the Duke for 'is stripe; an' the recommendation was confirmed. In a couple of days it was notified that he was appointed Actin' Lance Corp'ral. He came to me—I was orderly man that day, I remember—where I was scrubbin' tin cans an' dishes.

"It ain't much," he says, "but I'm started. It's the first step, an' things 'ull be easier now."

Poor beggar! Even I knew better than that! Him an Actin' Lance with no extra pay, an' talkin' about things bein' easier! Why, 'is troubles was only just commencin'.

There's always a good deal of jealousy about promotion, of course, an' some of the old soldiers in our room got to talkin'. They didn't intend to give the Duke a soft job of it, not if they could help it; and I wondered what he'd do.

Buffer Simpson—he was killed in ought-one at Neumayerspruit where we tried to 'oist the white flag—fell foul of him one night soon after he got his stripe. Buffer come in—a big bullock of a man he was—kickin' up noise enough for a half-battalion, carryin' on, makin' funny remarks an' so on.

"Shut that row!" says the Duke, who happened to be the N.-C. O. in charge of the room.

"Who are you?" says Buffer, quietin' down. "Who the —— do you think you are? A perishin' toff," says 'e. "That's your tally. Call yourself a Corp'ral, do you?" he says. "Some fellers work 'ard all their seven an' get nothin'. Others come along with a grip on the Colonel's belt an' get stripes, just because they're perishin' toffs."

The Duke, all this while, has been listenin' with a smile on his face, gentle an' peaceful like. Then he says:

"What are you gettin' at, Simpson?" Very quiet he spoke. "Why are you makin' all that row?"

"I'll make it if I want to," says Buffer, shovin' his face very close to the Duke's. "Who'll stop me? Not you, at any rate!"

"Oh!" says the Duke. "Then I don't quite know what I'd better do." He speaks very low an' soft, an' we all waited, not breathin' too loud. "Unless—" says the Duke very slowly.

He stopped there, an' then, quick as a flash, he ups with his right an' knocks Buffer Simpson down. An' when Buffer gets up ravin' mad the Duke knocks him down again. Buffer sits on the floor starin' at him with a look of horror almost in the one eye he could see out of.

"All right," says 'e, "I understand," an' goes to bed without any more fuss.

"If," says the Duke, "you 'ave any decided objections to my gettin' my skater"—'is stripe—"go to the Colonel by all means an' tell 'im so."

Of course, Buffer was 'arf drunk; but it was plucky all the same. Buffer Simpson wasn't a man to tackle easy.

No, sir, it ain't any fun bein' a young Lance Corp'ral in charge of a barrack-room full of old soldiers on pay night. If there's trouble it's the N.-C. O. what's responsible. It's him who gets hauled over the next mornin'. But the Duke never minded. He was a terror in a small way; he'd clink a man as soon as look at him.

"Hibbert," he says to me one day, "if I thought I couldn't manage 'em, I'd never be able to look a private in the face when I'm an officer."

I FORGET when it was that Sergeant Cotton first met the Duke, but he was posted to us from another company soon after he got his sergeant's stripes. One of them rather small, very smart men with a little pointed mustache an' fishy, gogglin' eyes. Took a lot of pride in 'is appearance, he did, an' talked big about what he really was an' who his people were.

"Another bloomin' gentleman!" says Ginger Williams in 'is 'appy way.

"An' who's that?" says the Duke.

"Sergeant Cotton," says Ginger, an' laughs to 'imself.

I don't think Cotton an' the Duke ever hit it off from the first moment they seen each other. The Duke had about as much tact as a tame zebra. If he didn't like a man he showed it pretty obvious, an' that was the start of all the subsequent trouble an' 'ostility, so to speak. For trouble there was—lashings of trouble, all 'round.

Cotton 'ud talk to the Duke, confidential-like, about what he'd been before he enlisted; 'is 'ome, an' 'is relations, an' so on. An'

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the Duke, he'd listen very polite an' tired an' respectful an' all that, without sayin' much but lookin' a whole heap.

"It's pretty rough, this kind of life, for you an' me," says Cotton. "Ain't it, Duke?"

"Is it?" the Duke says.

An' Cotton goes on, swellin' with pride.

"It's not the nicest thing in the world," he says, "havin' to live with an ignorant, uneducated crowd like we have in this company."

The Duke never says a word; just smiles very friendly and amused. But afterwards he comes over to me.

"The devil!" says he. "That little counter jumper gives me a bad taste in my mouth. Seems to me gentlemen are —— cheap in this reg'ment."

"Better go slow," I says; "an' whatever you do, don't get 'is back up."

The Duke laughs at me in 'is funny, superior way.

"Oh!" says 'e. "An' can't I look after myself, Hibbert? Besides," he says, "who's Cotton? Nothing but the cheapest little bounder that ever gave two shillings' worth of change for half a crown."

Well, skippin' a lot of things of no interest at all, the Duke gets 'is second stripe pretty quick, jumpin' over a good many 'eads in so doin'. Mind, I'm not sayin' he didn't deserve it; 'e did. But even bein' a Corp'ral didn't satisfy the Duke; not by a long chalk.

"Another step," says he, "but there's an awful long way to go yet. Sometimes," says 'e, "I think I'll be in the barrack-room all my life—or till my time's up."

But I says to 'im:

"Don't make yourself out to be any sillier than you already are, Duke. You've got your second stripe by some everlastin' miracle," says I, "an' before you know where you are you'll be recommended for a commission. Don't quarrel with tomorrer's rations," I says, "before you've finished today's. An'," says I, "you ought to think yourself lucky."

"Lucky!" he says. "I suppose I am. But even so," says 'e, "there's times I've wondered if a bullet wouldn't be the quickest way out of the ranks after all."

An' when the Duke was taken like that it weren't no use in tryin' to comfort 'im an' sayin' it was all in his seven. There's a limit to everything.

An' then what must he go an' do but start scrappin' with Sergeant Cotton, an occupation which wasn't goin' to bring him any honor or glory or nothin' except a visit to the orderly room. For by the very nature of things a sergeant is nearer the Colonel's ear than a corporal.

At that time there was a six-year man in the room called Rawlins; ugly, flat-footed, good-natured mule of a man with a slow laugh—the sort of man that can send an N.-C. O. ravin' mad just by lookin' at him an' smilin'. That is, if the N.-C. O. is a fool.

Rawlins never gave the Duke any trouble, because the Duke never took no notice of him. Cotton, 'owever, was great on dignity an' the respect due to his position, and he fretted 'is rotten little soul out, tryin' to find a cause for clinkin' Rawlins. If he'd waited he'd have found it easy enough. But he didn't want to wait.

One afternoon the Duke comes to me laughin'.

"That rat of a man, Cotton," he says, "has just asked me to back him up in runnin' Rawlins in for some lie or other; an insubordinate look, or insolence."

"What'd you say?" says I.

"Well," says the Duke, "I told him in confidence that if he could get to hell quicker any other way than the way he was goin', to try it. Yes," says 'e, "I said he could do his own dirty work by himself."

"You said that?" says I. "Then you're a bigger fool than I thought you were, an' that's sayin' a lot. He's a rat of a man, a mean-spirited little rat," I says, "but you ought to stand in with him, Duke, for the sake of what you're tryin' for. As for Rawlins," says I, "he deserves what he'll get sooner or later, an' you might just as well have helped Cotton clink him now."

The Duke just grins at me.

Six months or so after he got his stripe the trouble came, good an' plenty. One mornin' before A Company's kit inspection, a period of agony for all concerned, Cotton starts raggin' a rookie for arrangin' 'is kit—as 'e said—all wrong. Without waitin', he just scatters it all over the place.

"What —— defaulter," says 'e, "showed you *that* way of layin' your kit?" An' so on. "Make it up correctly, d'you hear!"

The Duke comes over to him.

"Beg your pardon, Sergeant Cotton," says he, very white about the gills. "I

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showed 'im, an' I'm not a —— defaulter. There was nothing wrong the way that kit was laid."

Cotton fairly goes mad.

"Wrong!" says 'e. "Nothin' wrong? It was all wrong."

The Duke sort of squints at him with his head tilted.

"It wasn't," says he, "an' if you think it was you're very much mistaken."

"Who d'you think you're talkin' to?" says Cotton.

"I've often wondered," says the Duke, very calm and not turnin' a hair. "I was talkin' the same as I'd have talked to a gentleman, that's all."

Cotton went purple, but what could he say? Nothin'.

An' now, leavin' Cotton aside for a while, comes the part of the yarn you may not believe; but it's as true as I'm sittin' 'ere. Beyond the next draft for foreign service the rank an' file worries very little what's happenin' in the battalion outside the company, an' cares less. So before most of us had heard any rumors or anything, we found that a new captain had been appointed to A Company, same as Cotton had been; on promotion, but from a Fusilier reg'ment. A rather thin, dried-up man he was, with a little black mustache and a sharp face an' a long chin, an' a quick, savage way of givin' the word of command on parade.

It was the day he joined us—I remembered that later when things began to straighten themselves out—that I came into the barrack-room an' found the Duke sittin' on his cot, huddled up with his head in his hands.

"Hullo!" says I. "What's up now, Duke?"

"Nothin'," says 'e, an' 'is voice sounded all different from what it should have been; an' his face looked about ten years older, an' gray almost.

"There's nothin' the matter."

I thought most like he was feelin' sick, perhaps, an' didn't ask any more questions. After a time, however, he gets up an' walks off very slow, with his head bent.

"Duke," says I, "Are you sick?"

"Go to ——!" says 'e, an' goes out of the door.

"What's wrong with the Duke?" says some one. "If he wasn't what he is I'd say he'd been drinkin'."

Well, bein' young an' ignorant, I didn't worry about whether anything was wrong or not. Why should I? How was I to know what it meant? How was I to tell that Captain Ryman's joinin' the battalion could make any diff'rence to the Duke, a corp'ral? But that was what it was, an' nothin' else in the world.

On the Sunday mornin' followin' something happened at parade service—something that I didn't know was happenin' till afterward, an' I've never been surprised at anything that's ever happened since. Yes sir, that's the solemn truth; an' you'll see what I'm drivin' at later.

The reg'ment had been marched into church, an' we'd taken our seats, an' the band outside had stopped playin'. There was no sound except the trampin' of feet an' the rustlin' an' coughin' as the fellers settled down.

NOW, that partic'lar Sunday, the Duke and I were sittin' right in front of every one else in the reg'ment, near where the officers had their seats; and as we waited for the service to begin I felt the Duke stiffen up an' heard him give a queer little choke in his throat. I turned my 'ead an inch or so an' saw the girl, not quite certain which pew to take an' whisperin' to Captain Ryman, who stood by her side lookin' as if he owned her, which he did, she bein' his wife. And a most amazin' pretty girl she was too—slight an' slender, quite young, with black hair, masses of it, and a soft pink an' white skin an' big, sorrowful brown eyes. She glanced at us as she passed into her seat, an' that's all.

Then I looked at the Duke, an' forgot all about the girl an' everything else. He was as white almost as his belt or his facings—we wore white facings on our tunics in them days, not green same as now—an' there were little drops of sweat on his forehead an' his teeth were pressed into his lower lip.

"What is it, Duke?" says I.

But he didn't say a word—just stared straight ahead of him, an' his fingers went up to his neck an' he undid his stock, an' then the blood came back into his face.

"What was the matter with you in church today?" says I later on. "The heat?"

"Yes," says the Duke, "I suppose so." And I let it go at that.

He didn't eat any dinner, an' most of

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the afternoon he lay on his cot with his face in his arms, without movin'. Long about tea time he got up, put on his uniform an' made for the door.

"Goin' out?" says I.

"Yes," says he. It wasn't often that one of us went out without the other, for all that he was a corp'ral an' me only a private, so I says—

"Like me to come along too?"

"No," says the Duke, "I wouldn't. I'm on pass an' I won't be back till re-vally."

That night, about half an hour before tattoo roll call, Buffer Simpson slinks into the room lookin' as if he'd seen a ghost.

"The Duke's blind drunk!" he says. "He's comin' up-stairs now."

An' then the door was kicked open an' in walks the Duke, shoulders squared, his eyes turnin' neither to the left nor the right. An' for all he carried himself like he was on parade, an' steady enough not to be noticeable, yet he was as Buffer said, blind drunk. What's more, the liquor was gettin' a hold of him.

No one says a word, an' he goes over to his own corner an' unbuckles his belt. An' then he tries to take off his tunic an' stands swayin' to an' fro, an' falls back on to his cot. He sits up very slow, laughin' a little in a foolish, drunken way, but goes very grave as he sees us watchin' him.

"Well!" says 'e with 'is lip curlin'. "What the —— are you doin'? Can't a gentleman undress without a crowd gatherin'?" And he gives another of 'is silly laughs an' gets on to his feet again, rollin' up his shirt sleeves.

"Now," says 'e, "where's that swine Cotton? You'll see something worth seein' in about ten minutes' time," he says. "Mister Archibald Cotton is goin' to get the biggest thrashin' he ever had in all his miserable little life. I'll show him," says 'e, "he can't treat me the way he's been doin'."

"Duke," says I, gettin' scared, "you chuck it! What do you think you're playin' at, you young fool?"

"Play, is it!" says he. "Play, do you call it? Let me tell you," he says, "it's dead an' —— earnest, as Sergeant Cotton will find out before he's a day older."

"But, my Lord!" says I, and I felt like lettin' him go to his own silly, pig-headed way. "You'll get run in, Duke, sure as fate, an' you'll lose your stripes. Duke," says I, "are you tryin' for your commission or are you not?"

"Oh, —— my commission!" says 'e. "An' you too!"

I can see the whole thing now—the Duke sittin' on his bed in his gray shirt an' blue trousers, an' his sleeves rolled up, with the yellow gas light shining on his thin, scraggy face, very red an' wet, with 'is eyes glazed, grinnin' at us standin' 'round an' watchin' him.

In about ten minutes it would be half past nine, an' the bugle would sound the First Post, an' the Duke would throw away nearly two an' a half years' hard work an' lose his commission. Did I tell you he was popular? He was. Most amazin' popular.

"Let's stop 'im!" says some one.

"How?" says Buffer. "How are you goin' to stop him? Ask him to kindly not make a fool of 'imself? Or how?"

An' then Rawlins, who by the same token was more than three parts drunk himself, says the only sensible thing he's ever said in his life.

"'E's on pass, ain't 'e? All right," he says; "tie him up so he can't fight, gag him so he can't yell, an' 'ide 'im where he can't be seen."

"The devil you will!" says the Duke, gettin' up. "The first of you scum that touches me—" an' then before he knew what had happened—yes, sir, it's the solemn truth—I fetches him a smack on the chin, an' stretched him flat on his back on his cot; an' Buffer Simpson claps a hand over his mouth.

Funny! Gawd's truth, it was! Six of us, privates, ropin' a corp'ral, 'and an' foot—Lord only knows where the rope came from, either—gaggin' him with an old handkerchief an' a piece of stick. A most demoralizing sight, of course!

"An' now," says I, when the Duke was trussed up, 'elpless, "now, what the —— are we goin' to do now? Leave him there for Cotton to see when he comes in?"

"Let's shove him in the cupboard under the stairs, an' let 'im stay there till mornin'," says Rawlins. "'Urry up!"

Which we does.

Ten minutes later we heard the bugle, an' soon after Sergeant Cotton, bein' orderly sergeant for the day, comes in to call the roll an' warn the guards an' fatigues; very brisk an' smart, same as usual. An' owin' to what we'd done, nothin' anyway out of

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the ord'nery happens save that Rawlins, who is 'ighly amused about something or other gets sent to the guard-room for bein' drunk an' insolent to an N.-C. O., the same being Sergeant Cotton.

Early next mornin', just before daybreak, I goes down-stairs in my stocking feet an' finds the Duke—well, just about the sickest-lookin' thing you ever set eyes on. I cuts the ropes an' takes out the gag.

"Well!" says I. "You're a nice young man, aren't you? I hope you're satisfied."

The Duke gives a kind of a groan.

"My God!" says 'e. "What happened? How did I get in this hole?" Him sitting there in his shirt sleeves with his teeth chatterin', an' me half dressed, grinnin' at him. "Who put me in 'ere?" says 'e.

"Don't make so much noise!" says I. "We put you there. I did, if you like it better. Single-'anded, of course," I says, "an' I hope we hurt you. You were drunk, that's why, an' makin' copious arrangements to fight Sergeant Cotton. Were we goin' to let you throw away your commission," says I, "for the sake of a swine like 'im?"

The Duke stares at me with a kind of look in his eyes that scared me.

"Oh, my God!" says 'e, an' puts his 'ands up to his 'ead. "What use is a commission to me?"

Mad! That's what I thought. Clean, stark, ravin' mad!

"Look here, Duke," says I. "You're goin' sick today. Understand? You ain't fit to go on parade, that's quite certain. You leave Cotton alone," says I, "or by ——! corp'ral or no corp'ral, I'll take the skin off your back with my belt."

Yes, sir, I said that. I did, an' I meant it. An' him sittin' there holdin' his head in his hands, half cryin'.

"I'm sick," says he. "Oh, God! I'm sick."

At eight-thirty, lookin' just about ready to hear the Dead March played for 'is own funeral, he reported himself unfit for duty an' went up before the doctor.

"An'," says Buffer Simpson, waggin' 'is 'ead, "I ain't surprised. I'd be sick, too, after what we done to 'im."

I'VE seen fellers change quickly from one cause or another but never have I seen any one change quite so much or so quickly as the Duke did in the next week or so. An' why was it? How could we tell? Things like what had happened to the Duke don't happen to all of us. An' thank God they don't, or life would be more of a nuisance than it is at present.

Did we ask him the reason? Do donkeys eat thistles? But we might just as well have asked the Duke of Wellington's statue what Napoleon Bonaparte thought of Waterloo. At the first word he was ready to fight any of us, or all. Which was only a bit more surprisin' than everything else—an' worryin', too.

One afternoon when the Duke was mopin' in the room, sittin' on his bed smokin' an' starin' out of a window, says I:

"Duke, you ain't eaten a thing for about two days. You don't sleep. You're lookin' like a chewed dish-rag. I don't know what's wrong, but come on out for a walk an' sweat it out of you."

He gets up off of his bed.

"Right!" says 'e. "I will." Which was the last thing I thought he'd say.

Autumn it was, but as fine as Summer, an' we walked hard for about four hours; miles an' miles, out an' back, over the hills all heather an' pine, 'round by the canal, an' I dunno' where else. I know this, that I was pretty near done by the time we reached Farnborough on our way home; but the Duke, he kept on at a four-an'-a-half-mile lick, not speakin' a word, just swinging along about three yards ahead of me all the way.

It was bound to happen sooner or later, of course, an' for the Duke's sake I'm glad it was then an' nowhere else.

A fox terrier runs through the trees on to the road, barkin'. He sees us an' stops; an' the Duke, he stops too, sharp. I walks on, past the Duke, bein' too tired to feel much interest in anything, even fox terriers.

"Tip!" says the Duke, chokin', kind of. "Tip!" An' then I had to stop whether I wants to or not.

The dog was waggin' its tail an' wrigglin' with joy like a dog will when he ain't seen you for some time, an' he's still a bit shy.

"He knows you, does he?" says I.

"Yes," says the Duke in a queer, husky voice. "He does. He was my dog once upon a time. Hibbert," he says, "let's cut through the trees. Quick!"

But it was no good. For no more than three yards away at the corner is a girl in white with a straw hat, starin' at the Duke an' the fox terrier, with her cheeks flamin' like poppies.

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"Tip," she says, "come here!' An then her voice changes an' her face goes pale.

"Alan!" she says. "Alan!" an' walks past me straight to'rds the Duke.

An' the Duke gives a little groan as if he's hurt, an' waits for her with his dog jumping up an' lickin' 'is 'and an' barkin'.

"Ethel!" says the Duke. "Ethel!"

An' me! I just stood there like a fool, for the girl in white was Mrs. Ryman!

"Alan!" says the girl very softly, an' somehow the way she said it seemed to hurt me. Yes, sir; it did. "Alan, why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you write?"

"What are you doin' here?" says the Duke. "Speakin' to a common soldier, an' you the wife of an officer! I told you, didn't I, that I never wanted to see you again?"

"Alan," says the girl, "you're not goin' to be so cruel. You can't be!"

Yes, she an officer's wife an' him a corp'ral in a line reg'ment, talkin' like that!

I moved off 'round the corner on to the main road that leads to Frimley an' Yorktown, an' there I waits, puzzlin' my brain as to what it meant an' how it had come about, an' wonderin' why I had been so blind as not to see what it was. But—well, I'd ha' guessed a million diff'rent things before I'd ha' guessed that. How could I?

Ten minutes or so later—or it might ha' been half an hour, maybe—the Duke goes by, without so much as seein' me, white as death, an' the girl follows with the dog an' looks after him, droopin' kind of.

"Alan!" she says. "Alan, come back!"

But he just keeps on as if he hadn't heard her. An' then the girl sees me gazin' at her with my mouth open.

"Tell him," she says, "tell him, I'm goin' away tomorrow to London for a month. Tell him I'll be stayin' where I used to stay. At my sister's. He'll understand. An' tell him," she says, lookin' at me very scornful, "I meant what I said, an' I'm not ashamed of it."

When we were back in our own lines an' the bugles were playing Retreat, the Duke halts.

"Hibbert," he says very slowly, "now you know why I enlisted. An'," says 'e, "she's here, with the battalion!"

All that evenin' he lay on his cot the same old way, not movin'. An' when he gets up an' goes out I follows him. The moon was shinin' an' he starts to walk across the parade ground. I touched him on the shoulder an' he turned.

"Well," says 'e, "what is it? Can't I go out without you doggin' me?"

"Duke," says I, "come on in. Where are you goin' this time o' night?" An' at that he laughs.

"Hibbert!" says 'e very slowly. "Hibbert, it was no fault of hers. Remember that! It was not her fault at all, only mine," he says. "Whatever they may say, it was not hers."

"An' Captain Ryman?" says I.

"No," says the Duke. "He never met me; not until I saluted him the first mornin' he joined the reg'ment had he ever seen me. But," says 'e, "he knows my name."

Then he gives a hard laugh.

"Hibbert," he says, "I may as well tell you that I don't intend to stay on in the reg'ment," says 'e. "Under the circumstances I can 'ardly do that, can I?"

I looked at him for a minute without speakin'. Then I says:

"Duke, you an' me have been friends for a long time, now. You're a corp'ral," I says, "an' I'm only a private; but," says I, "if I hear any talk of your not stayin' in the reg'ment, my son, or if I catch you so much as tastin' liquor, I'll belt you into hospital. You'd look a pretty sight," I says, "to be brought back a deserter, wouldn't you? A deserter! An' Sergeant Cotton smilin' an' sayin' he expected as much all along. Or perhaps," says I, "you'd get drunk again an' say things you'd be sorry for—things about her. Duke," says I, "is it worth it? My God!" says I, "be sensible! Is the girl worth your commission?"

The Duke looked at me very gravely an' then shakes 'is 'ead.

"No," says 'e; "on the whole I don't think she is." An' he begins to laugh as if he's said somethin' most amusin'.

"But," says 'e, "there's the first battalion, Hibbert; and I'll go out to India with the next draft."

"You will not," I says; "for I'm thinkin', Duke, you'll be an officer before then, an' I'll be Private Hibbert salutin' you."

AND I was right. In about three weeks time he was gazetted as Second Lieutenant in the old Body Snatchers; which was a come-down for any one who'd served with us, of course.

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"Duke," says I, an' I felt some'ow as if things were diff'rent already, even though he still wore the corp'ral's stripes. "Duke, you're an officer now," I says, "an' I think you'll make a good one."

"Hibbert," says the Duke, "I don't know if you know it, but it's you that got me my commission. If you hadn't knocked me out that night I'd have been in prison for assaultin' my superior officer an' bein' drunk an' disorderly. An', Hibbert," he says, "you've helped me more than you think. You've asked no questions, as you might have done, an' I thank you for that. What's more," he says, "nothin' I can do will ever begin to make up what you've done for me." Silly beggar, the Duke, in some ways.

Any'ow, that's all about how the Duke got his commission, which is what I set out for to tell you. Queer, wasn't it? There's a lot o' things about the Duke an' Captain Stanley Ryman an' his wife that I'd ha' liked to ha' found out. An awful lot. It was strange, when you come to think of it, meetin' the girl married to a captain in the same reg'ment, an' him a corp'ral. An' what did he mean by tellin' me to remember it was not her fault? That's what I never 'ave understood. It was all a puzzle from beginnin' to end.

SERGEANT HIBBERT stopped talking and sat with his arms folded over his knees, staring across at the harbor gleaming in the sunshine.

"That's not all, is it?" I asked after a time. "Didn't you ever meet the Duke again?"

Sergeant Hibbert nodded and dug into the turf with his heel. "Yes, sir, I did. I met him four years later—four years an' a half nearly. An' in a way that I'll never forget.

The sergeant hesitated, then went on with the tale.

IT WAS lonesome, kind of, said he, after the Duke left, so I went out to India with the next draft to the first battalion, the one here. Buffer Simpson went too, and Captain Ryman was in charge of us. Sergeant Cotton, of course, stayed on with the second battalion, an' what happened to him or where he is now, I do not know nor do I care—much.

In ninety-seven, as I 'ave told you, we were sent up into Tirah to fight the Pathans; an' in ninety-nine, early in the year, we come home. Now, all this time, I was in Captain Ryman's company, an' yet when we landed from off the transport at Southampton Dock I was no better acquainted with him than when we left Aldershot. Hard an' strict he was, heavy with his punishments, quick-tempered, never praisin', an' with little or nothin' to say for himself, but a good officer all the same. None better.

An' his wife! Never once did she so much as give a sign that she remembered me or what she told me to tell the Duke. She had all the money in the world she wanted, gave parties, had heaps of friends, horses to ride, an' better clothes to wear than any of the other officers' ladies, an' yet . . . I dunno. She was always the same: very quiet an' serious an' pale, never smiled very much—or so far as we could see—an' never went anywhere but what her husband went with her. A queer couple, them two.

In January, ought-ought, we reached Natal just in time for Spion Kop. It's always hard to remember how things happened exactly. Lookin' back, it's all a jumble, foot-sloggin', fightin', sittin' be'ind rocks or ant 'ills, listenin' to the bullets, an' all the time wonderin' whether Ladysmith an' what was left of ten thousand men could 'old out before we got through the hills. An' yet—most of the while we was only twelve miles away; but it might 'ave been a hundred, crossin' an' recrossin' that —— Tugela River.

But if most things kind of slide into each other an' get all blurred, there's one night that stands out clear an' distinct, each detail as if it were yesterday—the night when two companies of ours lay out in the open within a hundred yards of the Boer trenches.

In the afternoon we advanced north along the railway in the direction of Grobler's Kloof on the left of our line, an' pushed on in the twilight, on an' on, over hills an' rocks an' through the brush an' undergrowth, with the Boer field-guns rakin' us with shrapnel. On the right the Irish were bein' cut up at Inniskilling Hill.

As soon as it was dark the Boer Artillery ceased firin', an' I remember for one minute a kind of dull silence, an':

"Thank God!" says a man near me. "Now we'll 'ave a little peace!"

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But we didn't; the musketry started again, worse than ever, an' never ended, not for two days almost.

A couple of companies of ours were strung out among the rocks waitin', an' word comes to push on again at once an' occupy the ridge ahead of us. So on we went in a long, stragglin' line, up the slope, Captain Ryman in front, stumblin' along over the rough ground with our bay'nets fixed, an' not knowin' where the rest of the battallion had got to in the darkness.

"Ain't we never goin' to get no sleep tonight?" we asks. An' my subaltern, just six months from Sandhurst, chuckles.

"Sleep!" he says. "Who's talkin' about sleep? Smile an' be happy!" An' that's the last thing he ever says, as the breath was choked out of him by a Mauser bullet in the throat.

Was it a charge, that? Or just an advance to occupy a better position? God only knows! But we never reached the crest of the ridge. Not for a long, long time. An' why not? Because the Boers had a trench there that we never knew of. That's why.

We pushed on at the double—tired we were, too—an' then from straight ahead a long line of flame seems to jump out at us, an' there's a crash of rifles. "Get down!" says Captain Ryman in a kind of screech. "Get down!"

What could we do? Nothin', except lie there an' be killed. We couldn't go on or back. There was only about a hundred of us, half dead, tired an' hungry. We just dropped where we were, each man doin' his best to find a rock or some stones for cover.

"Let 'em have it!" says Captain Ryman. "At two 'undred! Independent!"

Are hours always the same length? I dunno. That night seemed a year long; an' most awful lonesome an' sad it was, lyin' there in the dark, with the Boers shootin' 'oles in us. An', sir, the worst part of that night was the poor chaps that were wounded. One, a boy in my company, who played in the reg'mental football team, had the lower part of 'is face blown off 'im an' couldn't die until mornin'.

An', listen; when they talk of war, remember that some of our wounded at Pieter's Hill lived for three days without bein' attended to! Night an' day, cold, an' scorchin' 'eat they lay there with their wounds rottin', an' the stench an' flies an' blood—no water, an' British an' Boers firin' over 'em all that time. We could 'ear 'em cryin' at night. War. . . . Oh, yes! War's war, of course! An' so is hell hell!

Beyond Church Parade every Sunday I can't say I'm much of a psalm-singin' Christian, but I dunno. Many a poor soldier boy went trudgin' up to the gates of 'Eaven that night in his dirty, blood-stained kharkee. An' I remember thinkin', lyin' there, shootin' at the flashes from the Boer trench, what it would be like.

"Halt! Who goes there?" the challenge. An' then:

"I'm Private John Smith, a drunken defaulter, a thief an' a liar; but I'm fresh from Pieter's 'Ill, an' I've got an explosive bullet in me stomach an' the back of me head's blown off. May I come in?" Well, it seems to me Private John Smith would be passed through without much bother from the Sergeant of the Guard.

Funny! I was lyin' next Captain Ryman, be'ind the same rock, an' I got to know 'im better that night than in the four years that we'd been together.

"We must stay here," says 'e, "whatever happens. If I'm killed, Hibbert," he says, "hold your ground till you're relieved. Understand!"

I was only a corp'ral, but there wasn't a sergeant anywhere near. We talked quite a lot that night about one thing an' another. Queer, wasn't it?

"A man's got to die some time," he says, "an' I'd just as lief die in battle as in bed. An' some'ow," says 'e, "I don't think I'll ever see 'ome again. I've had most things life 'as to offer, an' I dunno if it's worth while after all."

What could I make of that? Nothin'. You'll always find fellers who get like that when they're under fire. Melancholy, sort of, an' not responsible.

Near dawn—an' mind, this kind of thing was goin' on all along our front—our fellers began to get restless, what with the bullets an' everything, an' some tried to make off. They didn't get very far, though, most of 'em. You couldn't move but what them Boers 'ud see you, an' then: *Bang! bang! bang! bang!* Half a dozen bullets 'ud come crackin' up the dirt all 'round you. As for shootin', the best marksman in our crowd were third-class shots alongside the Boers.

"My God!" says some one. "Let's get out of this before we're all dead!" An'

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Captain Ryman curses him in his own partic'lar style.

"You stay where you are," says 'e, "an' die like your betters die."

I dunno, though; I was as ready to cut an' run as any of the rest of 'em, an' it seemed we were bound to be wiped out whether we stayed or not.

AN' THEN, at daybreak, there was a yell be'ind us, an' a rush of feet, an'—talk about a mob!—a couple of companies from another reg'ment comes advancin' at the double with fixed bay'nets.

"That's the Body Snatchers!" sings out one of our crowd. Ryman jumps up shoutin':

"Don't let them Welshmen get in ahead of us!" an' throws up his arms an' pitches forward on to his face.

Before I knew quite what had happened we were on our feet makin' for the Boer lines, cheerin', all mixed up with the Welshmen, tryin' to get there first. A most amazin' charge that was, with the subaltern in command of the other crowd, cursin' 'em cheerful-like:

"Into 'em, Body Snatchers! Get into 'em!"

There wasn't many of the Boers that waited for the bay'nets; an'—I dunno—I don't blame 'em. We were scattered somewhat by the rough ground, but that didn't matter; nothin' mattered, except the Boers.

As we reached the trench, yellin', the Welshmen an' us, an' went into 'em with the bay'net, the man next me was shot. In fallin' he grabbed my arm, an' I slid over on to my knees, an' before I could get up a Boer was swinging at me with his butt. A big man he was, with a dark beard.

"I'm done!" says I, but some one sailed past me, an' the Boer went back into the trench.

I sat up feelin' dizzy.

"Pretty close that, Hibbert, wasn't it?" says the feller that had bay'netted the Boer.

"Good man!" says I. An' then, "Good God!" I says.

"It's the Duke!"

An' the Duke it was, bendin' over me, with his carbine in his hand; dirty an' brown an' ragged, but the same as ever he was when him an' me was in the ranks together.

"You hurt?" says he quickly.

"No, sir," says I; an' I gets up.

"Who's in command of you people? We can't stay here."

"Captain Ryman," says I. "Or he was, but there's no officers left."

"All right," says the Duke. "Back you get. Retire! An' hurry up"

So we made our way back to the rocks where we'd been all night, with the Boers crashin' volleys at us harder than before. Captain Ryman lay all twisted where he'd fallen, very white an' quiet.

"Are you 'urt, sir?" says I.

"Dead, almost," he says with a little shiver.

"Don't you give way, Hibbert!" he says. "Hold your ground till you're relieved."

Then he sees the Duke.

"Is that an officer?"

"Yes, sir," says the Duke, crawlin' toward him. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Look after my fellers, like a good chap, won't you?" An' with that Captain Ryman died.

SERGEANT HIBBERT straightened his back and yawned.

"Well, sir, that's the end of the story. That's how the Duke an' me an' Captain Ryman met again at Pieter's Hill. Queer how things come about, ain't it?"

"Did you ever hear what became of Mrs. Ryman?" I asked.

"Yes," said Sergeant Hibbert with a little nod of his head and a curious smile. "I heard. It's more of a mystery now than it ever was. The Duke—he was a captain by that time—the Duke came home from Quetta three years ago on leave, an' married her in London. That's how it ended, but what it means or how it happened or why things should ever have got twisted that way to begin with, is more than I can tell. But I know this: whatever was wrong has been made right, an' the rest's not worth while bothering about."

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The Winner

by Thomas Addison

Author of the "Come-on Charley" series, "The Whip Hand," etc.

THE "Winner" was the name Peter Cheek gave the new cigar. Had he been older he would not have done it. He would not have hurled a challenge at the gods who pull the strings of destiny and laugh to see the puppets at the end of them start to dance.

The ancients of the trade—those wise men who have paid the price experience exacts—will smile at the bare notion of such audacity. They will tell you that he who can divine public favor for a fledgling nickel smoke can as easily foresee on Monday the way the wind will blow on Sunday. And, furthermore, when there is not an ounce of money energy behind the brand to push it—as with Peter's boss—they will tell you 'tis simple, in comparison, to raise a pinhole into prominence.

Truly so. But Peter Cheek was a rash, bold, unbridled, sanguine youth who believed in himself to a miracle; therefore he blithely borrowed from the morrow a promise for today, and set himself the task of coaxing it to fulfilment. How he did this makes matter for a tale.

"Can you sell goods?" questioned Robert Larkin, cigar manufacturer on limited capital, when Peter came to him for a job one rare June day.

"I can sell anything you can hitch a price to," admitted Peter modestly.

"Ever sell cigars?"

"I have sold," Peter stated quietly, "soap in South Carolina."

Larkin's sense of humor was chastened by half a score of years which Peter was yet to count unto himself; but he smiled now, slightly, and said:

"Looking for something easy, eh?"

"You've guessed it," rejoined Peter; and his answering smile spoke better for him than a ream of references.

"Do you smoke?" Larkin asked him.

"Try me," entreated Peter.

The manufacturer swung around to his desk. On it were two little heaps of cigars, perfecto size, unbanded. He took a cigar from one heap and proffered it to Peter.

"It's a five-center," he remarked. "Tell me what you think of it."

He watched the young fellow as he smoked, sizing him up—his sturdy, well-knit frame, resolute chin, and keen blue eye. He looked rather good to Larkin, who was wanting an aggressive city salesman.

When Peter had smoked an inch of the perfecto he laid it aside, got up and walked over to the water-cooler, rinsed his mouth and returned to his seat.

"Next!" he prompted.

Larkin laughed. He was pleased. This chap was not to be led on a string.

"But what do you think of that one?" he demanded.

"Mild; burns well; a trifle bitter," pronounced Peter.

Larkin passed him a cigar from the second heap. Peter lit it, crossed his long legs, took his knee in his hands, and gave himself over studiously to his task. After a while he spoke:

"Got the first beaten a block. It's a bird. Same price?"

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"Yes. I've been a solid year perfecting that blend, and I'm ready now to market it. The other is the 'Jingo,' the Crowder Cigar Company's leader. You've seen it advertised. It's on the walls and in the papers. I stripped the bands off to disarm prejudice for or against it."

"You did it," Peter assured him.

"The point is this," insisted Larkin. "I've got to buck the Jingo here in Crowder's home town. That takes money. To be frank with you I haven't any—not enough to make a real fight. Quality counts, somebody has said. Does it, in my fix? What's the answer, Mr. Peter Cheek?"

"This is so sudden!" protested Peter. "I must have time to think it over."

He smoked another minute in silence; it was the best nickel cigar he had ever stuck between his teeth. Then he asked—

"Have you named it?"

"I am not decided——"

"I am," put in Peter calmly. "It's the 'Winner.' Am I hired?"

"The 'Winner?'" Larkin shied off a little. "That's certainly discounting in advance——"

"Sure," said Peter. "You've got the goods. Back 'em up. Claim everything, like the other side at election. We'll sneak 'em in when Crowder isn't looking. Am I hired?"

"You are not—not yet. Go out and sell a few. When you come back we'll talk."

"It will cost you more then," Peter told him. "Give me my samples."

He came in at closing time, and sat down and gazed fixedly at Larkin, but without a word.

"Pretty soft, eh? Made a clean-up?" queried the cigar man cunningly.

Then said Peter to him:

"See here, just what did you expect me to do today?"

"Nothing," confessed Larkin openly. "You've got to get acquainted with the trade. There are thirty-five regular cigar stands and three hundred saloons in this city. That means work, and it's heartbreaking with a new brand. I might as well tell you that, first as last, if you haven't found it out already."

"I have," asserted Peter. "You are wasting time, governor. Talk turkey."

"What? You are going to stick? You're not going back to soap?" The taunt was intentional.

For reply Peter fished from his pocket a slender sheaf of orders and laid them on the desk. In all they totaled but a thousand cigars, and in lots of fifty, most of them. Larkin made no comment; he ran over the orders with an eye to credits. They were from the cream of the retail trade, down-town stands and bars. He turned to Peter, and being a wise man and a decent fellow he did not attempt to conceal his gratification.

"Good! First rate! I didn't expect it. You've put one over on me," he said warmly. "It caught on, did it—the Winner?"

"Yes, it did not," replied Peter. "They liked it. Fine smoke, and all that, but no demand. You know the patter. Crowder has this local trade sewed up tight. Show a nickel and they shove a Jingo at you. I got that little mess of trial orders by main strength. Talked an arm off. They'll hide the box, of course, in the back of the case and forget it's there unless we start 'em moving."

"Go on," requested Larkin. "You know how I'm fixed. If you've anything up your sleeve, bring it out."

A smile lurked in Peter's eyes and twitched the corners of his mouth.

"I went to see a jobber this afternoon," he said slowly—"Judson Davis Company. They wouldn't even take a squint at my samples. Thirty-two dollars, and no demand? They laughed at me! I told them I wouldn't call again—they'd have to come to me next time, and running. Then they laughed some more. Am I hired?"

"At twenty dollars a week, and expense money," Larkin specified. "Go on."

"Pooh!" jeered Peter. "I'm not looking for small change. I'll take ten per cent. commission, and a working interest in the business when I've sold half a million Winners. So that's settled. Now——"

"Hold on!" cried Larkin, laughing in spite of himself. "There's a time limit to a bluff like that."

"Sixty days from date for the first quarter of a million," said Peter. "Rush an order for the bands—something neat—and get the goods out. I'll do the rest."

"Would you mind telling a perfect stranger how," inquired Larkin politely.

"To be sure," returned Peter with equal suavity, "though I haven't worked out the

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details yet. I just got on to it today. The Benevolent Order of United Ionians hold their triennial national convention and outdoor meet here in August—tenth to thirteenth. There will be something like twelve thousand of them. I'm going to make that gang smoke the Winner, if there's a way to do it—and there always is if you hunt around."

Larkin showed disappointment.

"It can't be done," he declared. "Let me tell you something, youngster. Crowder will see to it that the officials of the Order are supplied with his cigars; he makes a point of it at all conventions here; and they'll boost them to the rest. I can't afford to give away goods like Crowder does—beat him at his own game."

Peter regarded him with pity.

"Who said anything about giving 'em away? Any fool can do that. And nobody gives a cuss for what he doesn't pay for. I'm going to sell the Winner to that mob of merry boys. That's my job. You hurry up those bands and buy me a ticket to Elgin, Illinois, when I call for it. That's your job."

"To Elgin? Why?"

"To see John Cafferty, the Grand Ion. He lives there."

"Well?" Larkin waited with plain impatience.

"That's all," said Peter, getting up. "I'll have to dream the rest. See you in the morning."

"Just a minute, Mr. Cheek." Larkin, tilted back in his chair, his hands clasped behind his head, surveyed the young man quizzically. "You've given me a pretty big order. How do I know——"

"You don't know," Peter interrupted coolly. He stood looming large above the desk, his head thrust forward, his eyes intent. "And you won't if you can't see that I'm no ordinary pack-pedler. You have my references. Call 'em up. I left Raynes & Goddard because they didn't want ideas. Ask 'em. They'll tell you I was insubordinate. I am, when I find I'm with a house that has moss on its brains. I'm alive. I can't work in harness with a dead one. If you're that kind I'm through right now."

Larkin met this challenge in silence; but his eyes never left Peter's.

"And don't you forget one thing, governor," Peter finished: "you are not taking any bigger chances on me than I'm taking on you and your smoke."

The cigar manufacturer spoke now. His decision was made.

"I'm with you," he agreed. "Go to it."

"Good!" said Peter, and went out. He walked as if the earth was a carpet unrolling to his feet.

"Great Scott!" breathed Larkin softly to himself; and he reached for a telegraph blank to send a night letter to the Electric Cigar Band Company in New York.

II

PETER discovered that he would not have to make the trip to Elgin. The Grand Ion, he learned from the newspapers, would come to the city a week in advance of the convention to handle on the spot the final details of the gathering. This was to Peter's liking. It is easier to dominate a man in your camp than in his.

Two weeks had passed since Peter came to terms with Larkin. Each night he turned in a few small trial orders, but he said nothing of his larger plan to push the Winner. And Larkin did not question him. He had measured up his man and, feeling curiously assured that his judgment was sound, he went about his cigar-making, putting on an extra force at the benches and himself keeping a close eye to the product. Quality plus publicity constitutes an irresistible force.

Then one morning Peter marched into the office with a shining face. The big idea had come to him in the night. It rounded out his plan and cinched it. It couldn't fail.

"You've rung the bell?" said Larkin, with a quick, appraising glance at him.

"I've smashed it. There's nothing to it. Listen." And Peter sat down and talked.

An hour later he jumped off a trolley-car out at the Mechanics' Building. It was the convention hall, and it was spread over an entire block. Within a stone's throw Peter counted seven beer saloons. Conventional bodies in the Middle West, and in midsummer, are considerate of the city's water-supply; the lawns have prior claim.

Peter entered the nearest saloon. The sign proclaimed that it was conducted by one Gus Kolben. An elderly German, presumably Herr Kolben himself, was sitting behind the bar reading the weekly

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Staats Zeitung. He got to his feet ponderously and waited, his hand instinctively feeling for the beer-tap.

"Have one on me," invited Peter. "Mine is seltzer."

The rites over, the German's face settled into lines of resignation. An attempt was to be made to sell him something; he knew the symptoms, though Peter carried no visible evidences of the fell intention. But, as it happened, he was mistaken.

"There are two breweries in this town," observed Peter casually. "Which beer do you handle?"

"Heidemann's."

"What's the matter with Boescher's? Isn't it right?"

The Teuton shrugged.

"It's a goot beer—yah—but Boescher, he don't advertise. You can't sell beer vot aindt no call for. Nein. You got to advertise."

"Right!" assented Peter. "Pearls of wisdom have fallen from your lips, my friend. You've got to advertise. And—don't forget it—that means you. Keep saying it to yourself till I call again. Say, 'I've got to advertise.' Say it!"

There was something so compelling in the tone, so insistent in the blue eyes fixed on his, that the German, half-hypnotized, repeated the words with, at the same time, a look of profound astonishment at himself.

"Good morning," said Peter sternly, and went away.

He visited in turn the six other saloons, in some finding it needful to take the man in charge aside to repeat to him his formula. He left in his wake a wave of mild excitement and conjecture—whether he was just crazy or a practical joker—but he established as a certainty what had been only surmise on Larkin's part: Boescher's beer was not in demand, at least in this one neighborhood.

He walked back to the heart of the city, prosecuting his research on the way. Indeed, he spent the entire day, and others following, in this pursuit, and the tabulated results were even beyond his hopes. Then he went to see August Boescher.

"You'll have to wait a while," said the blond young man in the outer office, looking up from his typewriter. "Mr. Boescher is busy."

"What is he doing?" demanded Peter truculently. His manner denoted that it was a supreme impertinence to request him to wait on any man; and it bore fruit.

"Mr. Henry Crowder, of the Crowder Cigar Company, is with him," answered the stenographer humbly. "I can't say when they will be through."

Peter was taken aback. Here was a person he was not fondly anxious to encounter yet a while.

"Oh, it's Crowder," he forced himself to say, as if that altered the case materially. "Then I'll go. Tomorrow——"

He stopped. An idea had popped into his mind. This chap handled the brewer's correspondence; he ought to know things. Peter put a question to him in the tone of the prosecution with a stubborn witness:

"What is your name?"

"Herman Wuttke."

"Oh!"

The exclamation suggested that the answer was of itself incriminating evidence. Peter contemplated the witness a moment as might one to whom all flesh is glass. Then he stabbed another question at him.

"Wuttke, how does Boescher stand in this matter with Crowder? You know!"

It was an accusation. Mr. Wuttke, with a creepy feeling that the calendar on the wall at his back could be read through him, stammered a reply.

"Why, sir—really—I—don't think Mr. Boescher has decided. He wouldn't consider it at all—I'm sure of that—only——"

"Only?" Peter's eyes bored into him.

"Only," blurted out the other desperately, "he's got to push the business, and needs the money."

"Just so," acceded Peter, instantly grasping the situation. "But he doesn't want to be robbed. Now pay attention to me, Wuttke. When I leave, you are to call Boescher out and tell him to hold Crowder off. Tell him not to make a move till he sees me. He is to sit tight, keep mum, and wait. I'll come around tomorrow and show him how to push his beer without a red cent from any one. Get that—without a cent! Do you follow me?" He pierced Mr. Wuttke with a scowl.

"Yes, sir. Your name, please?"

"That," decreed Peter, "is for Boescher only."

He turned and swung out of the room. He made straight for the factory, and said to Larkin:

"Ring up Dun's and get a special report

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on August Boescher;" and he recounted his interview with Wuttke. "The way I make it," he added, "is that Crowder's hunting an investment. Boescher brews a dandy beer, but he's slow as snails on the selling end. He's working on a schedule that might have done in father's time but will wreck him now if he isn't side-tracked. He has simply got to advertise or go under, and Crowder sees the chance to buy into the business cheap and reorganize it. That's the layout or I'm an oyster."

Larkin broke into a relishing chuckle.

"Peter," he observed, "when we get through with Crowder he'll love us like a sore toe."

"Stubbed twice on the same brick," grinned Peter happily.

III

MR. AUGUST BOESCHER was an oldish, ox-faced person, in heavy ballast, and of a slumberous demeanor. He was seated at a big table in a barren room commanding for only view the brew-house. Peter, when Mr. Wuttke meekly showed him in, made no attempt at conversational preliminaries. He knew precisely what he was going to say, and how. He gave his name, sat down at the table across from Boescher, and remarked:

"Your beer is good; it ought at least to divide the local trade with Heidemann's, but it doesn't. A bare twelve and a half per cent. is all you are getting. I've the figures on it. Compiled 'em myself. You're asleep at the switch, colonel. Wake up!"

He said this last in tocsin tones. Mr. Boescher blinked and moved in his chair. Peter pointed a finger at him.

"You don't need money to push your beer; you need brains, and I'm here with the commodity. I'm going to sell your beer for you—sell it, understand, at your own price to the trade. I'm going to make the leading saloons in this city put it in. I'm going to make that bunch of bars at the Mechanics' Building cry for it, put banners out in front playing it up. I'm going to make it the talk of the town. When the Ionians meet here next month they'll drink nothing but Boescher's beer. In four days they, and others, will put away half a million glasses of your suds, or mighty near it, and they'll go home—to forty-eight states, remember—rooting for it. Some advertising, what? And—freeze to this—it won't cost you a copper cent."

Mr. Boescher stretched forth a puffy hand and pounded a call-bell. Mr. Wuttke made his appearance in the door.

"Herman, go undt get a cop," the brewer bade him in a rumbling voice.

"Herman, go chase yourself; I'm busy," Peter countered. And then to Boescher: "You've another guess if you think I've nothing better to do than come here and fill you up on fairy tales. I'm feeding you facts. Here's your case in plain words: You are running on the rocks. Do you want Crowder to pull you off and claim everything for salvage? Or do you want me to do it and ask nothing but your co-operation in a little scheme to push my own goods? I'll give you sixty seconds to say yes."

Peter laid his watch on the table. Mr. Wuttke, hesitating in the doorway, glanced nervously from one to the other. Mr. Boescher conceded the question:

"Vot iss your line, did you say?"

"Cigars. Robert Larkin's Winner. So named because it's going to do it—win. Try one." He shoved a Winner across the table.

Mr. Boescher apparently did not see the cigar. He gazed impassively at the wall over Peter's head. The cumbersome machinery of his mind was grinding on the matter presented to it.

Peter reached for his watch. Time was up. Mr. Boescher made a massive gesture of rescission to Mr. Wuttke, who made a glad escape. And then Peter was given a surprise. Concealed behind the heavy mask of the brewer's visage was a flickering of humor; for he said, without the change of a muscle:

"Go straighdt on. Make for me my fortune."

"That's for you to do," Peter shot back at him. "I'm simply going to start you off. And before I do it I must have your pledged word—whether you accept my proposition or not—that what I'm about to say remains between us two. Have I got it?"

Mr. Boescher picked up the cigar lying before him, lit it, pulled at it, and considered Peter stolidly. Presently he nodded—once—twice—a pause for recovery between each. It was good as an oath, and Peter knew it.

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"I get you," he said, "and here you are: grab every word. During the four days of the Ionian Convention each band from my cigar is to be good for a glass of Boescher's beer over any bar in the city; and you are to redeem these bands at a face value of five cents to all saloon-keepers who send them in to you."

"Eh? Do vot?" Mr. Boescher removed the cigar from his mouth.

"Here! Get it straight!" said Peter quickly. "My cigars are not now banded. Not one of them with a band will be put out until the first day of the convention. At midnight of the last day the bands will cease to have a value. They must be mailed to you with a postmark between that hour and 6 A. M."

"Oh, sure!" Mr. Boescher was sarcastic. "Sure! Undt they'll dake der bands from all der left-overs undt——"

"No, they won't," cut in Peter. "They'll play square—it won't pay not to. Besides, I'll understock 'em. They'll have to beg for the goods. And anyway I'll guarantee Larkin will settle for all over half a million."

"Half a million? So!" Mr. Boescher put down the cigar and figured with a pencil on a slip of paper. "At fife cents dot iss twenty-fife thousand dollars!"

"Go on. Don't stop," Peter urged him. "Figure it in kegs sold. You know what your cost is—strike a balance. You'll break a little under even maybe, but look at the advertising you get! You couldn't buy it for fifty thousand dollars cash. You'll start people to drinking Boescher's beer who'll keep on asking for it—here at home—everywhere. They'll get the habit. Man alive, where is your imagination? Can't you see?"

Mr. Boescher laid aside his pencil and gazed out of the window at the blank wall of the brew-house. It was not a pretty picture, yet into his pale blue eyes crept a light which, presently, kindled his sluggish features. For he saw!

"Der one imbordant question iss," he rumbled, "how will you make dose Ionians smoke dot cigar? Der free beer won't do it all. Der vas got to be a way——"

"Say! Take a peek at me!" requested Peter. "Do I look as if I didn't know my business? That's my job—to make that crowd smoke up. And there are others—a cityful. Leave it to me. What I want to know is, are you with me?" FILL

The brewer's mouth opened to reply, but before a sound could issue, the door was jerked back on its hinges and a man entered in contemptuous disregard of the frantically protesting Mr. Wuttke. He was a little, whiskered man, full of pepper and bristling with the sense of his own importance. It is the little man's hedgehog armor against possible rude assaults upon his dignity.

"Boescher," cried the intruder irritably, "I'm called out of town. There's no satisfaction talking with you on the phone, so I took a cab. If this gentleman——"

Peter stood up with a nod of understanding.

"Growder"—began Boescher.

Peter sat down, withdrawing, as it were, the nod.

"Der deal iss off," finished Boescher.

"What's that?" Mr. Crowder, though questioning the German, centered a fiery gaze on Peter, who smiled at him comfortably.

"I haf made oder arrangements, Growder," added the brewer; and he took up his cigar and relighted it.

The action, slight as it was, seemed in a way to carry with it the suggestion of dismissal. Mr. Crowder turned a brilliant red, a reflection from a suddenly superheated temper.

"I might have known it!" he snarled. "You can't do business with a Dutchman. It's a waste of time to try. It takes them a week to turn around, and two to go ahead." He directed a sneering glance at Peter. "You may think you've got him hooked, young man, whatever your line is, but——"

"Perhaps I can interest you," interrupted Peter blandly. "I'm selling caterpillar fur to trim bedroom slippers for the Belgians."

Mr. Crowder turned from red to purple. He clenched his fists and stuttered incoherently. Peter rose. He could have pinched the little man in two with his thumb and finger.

"There's the door," he said, still pleasantly. "Go and have your fit outside. And hurry, or you'll miss your train."

He took a forward step, and Mr. Crowder, disliking something in his mien, sputtered forth a malison and hastily departed. Peter heard a curious rattling sound behind

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him and turned to see the cause. Mr. Boescher was laughing laboredly. But in response to Peter's answering chuckle he only said, rolling his cigar to the other corner of his mouth:

"It iss a goot smoke, this—vot you call it—this Vinner."

When Peter got back to the office he challenged Larkin.

"I'll better that bluff of mine a bit, governor. It's half a million Winners sold by the last day of the convention, and a third interest in the business. Terms later. Are you on?"

Larkin looked at him. He felt like locking Peter up in the safe overnight to make sure nobody would steal him.

"I am," he said.

IV

THE GRAND ION was come to town. He arrived in the evening, and Peter allowed him till noon of the nexy day in which to establish himself with his staff of secretaries at the convention hall; then he went out there.

Before going into the building he stood on the curb and surveyed with a grin Gus Kolben's beer saloon across the way. Twice a week since his call on him Peter had mailed to Mr. Kolben and his immediate confreres a message on a postal card. It was neither prayer nor argument; it was a command, brief as Wellington's "Up, Guards, and at 'em!" to wit:

Say it! "I've got to advertise."

Peter rather reckoned it had kept his memory green in this especial quarter, and the grin still lingered as he strode into the executive offices of the Grand Ion. This exalted personage was sequestered in the last of a suite of rooms. In the first, one announced his business. In due course he was filtered through the succeeding rooms until, finally, elutriated and refined to the absolute essentials of his errand, he was admitted, or was not, to the august Presence.

In this first room were a dozen persons waiting to be put through the decrassifying process, and Peter was of no mind to cool his heels with these people. He met with chill reserve the young man attendant who approached him, and anticipated any troublesome inquiries. He said—

"Say to Mr. Cafferty that I have a contribution to make to the Ionian Charity Fund—several thousand dollars—and I'm pressed for time."

The young man looked Peter over. The appointments of his dress were without reproach, his poise was perfect, and no light of lunacy glittered in his eye. The young man was impressed.

"Will you favor me with your card?" he asked with deference.

Peter permitted an impatient gesture to escape him.

"I prefer to remain anonymous to all but Mr. Cafferty. Is that sufficiently explicit?"

It was. Within three minutes Peter was closeted with the Grand Ion. He scanned Peter's card somewhat dubiously, for the name suggested possibilities; but being a contractor in a large way, also a big man, and Irish, the guiles of men did not greatly perturb him. So he silently awaited developments. Peter sensed his attitude.

"I don't blame you," he began easily. "I'd feel the same in your place. But I'm neither crazy nor crooked. I'm here to swell your Charity Fund to the tune of four or five thousand dollars. It is entirely up to you."

Mr. Cafferty received this without emotion, and responded in two words:

"Show me."

Peter placed before him a cigar. He named the jobbing price, and drew attention to the band.

"You will notice it is called the Winner. If you will smoke it you will know the reason why. If all you Ionians will smoke it at a nickel straight during the convention——"

The Grand Ion brought a huge fist crashing down upon the table.

"Get out of here!" he roared.

"Every thousand you smoke will net you eighteen dollars for the Fund," concluded Peter evenly, and looked into the angry eyes across from him. He added: "Mine is the biggest proposition ever offered to an Order. I've been weeks working it out. Are you man enough to listen, or does it go—what you just said?"

This was an appeal to fair play that Cafferty, the Irishman, found hard to withstand. In his confusion he took up the Winner and bit off the end without thought of its source. Peter civilly struck and

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tendered him a match, and the last straw of resistance was swept away. Cafferty could not smoke another man's cigar and refuse to hear him.

"Get it over quick, and make it painless," he bargained, and settled back in his chair.

"There will be twelve thousand of you Ionians here next week, I'm told," Peter proceeded smoothly. "Counting out the ladies and a few non-smokers there'll be ten thousand, say, who will buy the Winner to help the Cause. A man smokes twice as much as usual when away from home. Four cigars is a moderate normal daily allowance. Call it seven cigars a day as your average consumption per capita at the convention. You are here four days—Oh, what's the use? Figure it yourself at eighteen dollars, and say you're glad I came!"

Mr. Cafferty's face had undergone a change of expression. His fancy was fired. Moreover he was constrained to acknowledge to himself that the Winner was a rare good nickel smoke. He apologized.

"Ye'll pardon me, Mr. Cheek. At first I thought——"

"Don't mention it," said Peter, helping him out. "It was a bit raw on my part, but it was the only way I could get to you right. I had to do it because, you understand, this means a lot to me." He smiled at the Grand Ion engagingly. "If I put this deal over I get an interest in the business. On your part you don't risk a cent. I'll send up the first ten thousand cigars on consignment. You pay for 'em as you sell 'em. All I ask is a written word from you saying the Winner is the Ionians' official cigar at this meeting."

"The devil you do!" exclaimed the Grand Ion. "Who ever heard of such?"

"Nobody, and they won't till Wednesday when there'll be half-page ads in all the papers telling of it, and again on Sunday," rejoined Peter. "You have an official badge, an official flag, an official program—why not an official cigar that will bring you in five thousand beautiful bucks, and more if you push it right?"

Mr. Cafferty's eye betrayed a twinkle, but he said:

"And how are we to push it?"

"Stands. Here in the hall, and at the outdoor meet; and on the last day—'Everybody take home a box!' Get your ladies to do the selling—for sweet charity's sake—your widows and orphans—your sick and afflicted. Jerusalem, man! have I got to go on?"

Mr. Cafferty smoked thoughtfully. To accord the stamp of the Order to a cigar was a commitment that gave him pause. He was afraid that he might be exceeding his authority, and more afraid, being human, of censure for the act.

"I'll think it over," he announced. "Come tomorrow——"

And let Crowder get wind of it? Not if Peter knew himself!

"I may be buzzing about among the stars tomorrow, Mr. Cafferty," he said. "You never can tell. And if you let this thing get away from you today it's gone for good. I'm not here on a begging errand, you will kindly bear in mind."

The Grand Ion glanced at him, and he recognized the set to Peter's jaw. Yet still he hesitated. Whereupon Peter played his trump.

"Look out of the window," he requested. "See that saloon? There are others near it. All of them will nail a streamer ad. across their fronts. This is what it will say: 'Winner Cigar Bands Exchanged for Boescher's Beer.' Do you get me? A Winner band passed over the bar at any wide-awake saloon in this burg during your convention will pay for a glass of Boescher's beer—the best on earth! The papers will run a directory of the places every day, and we'll have card directories printed to hand out at the stands."

"Aha!" ejaculated the big Irishman with a knowing nod.

"Yes," said Peter, returning the nod, "it's a scheme to boost my cigar. Can you beat it? The saloons will have to fall in line; they've got to do it or lose trade. And do you think there won't be a holy howl from your boys if you let a double-action, gilt-edged gift enterprise like this slip by 'em? Why, all I've got to do is to furnish bed and board and fix 'em up complete! Is it that you're waiting for, Mr. Grand Ion?"

Cafferty threw back his head and let out a laugh.

"Say no more!" he choked. "You named it right—this torch of yours."

And when he had composed himself he wrote in due form a proclamation which made the Winner the official cigar of the Benevolent Order of United Ionians, and

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sealed it with the great seal of the Grand Ion.

Going down the steps to the street, Peter, to his pleased surprise, met Mr. Henry Crowder coming up. He carried a heavy package which by its shape bespoke cigars. Mr. Crowder, on occasions which he considered commensurate with his own fair estimate of himself, felt it not beneath his dignity to tote his gifts in person.

"Why, hello, Jingo!" Peter saluted him. "Aren't you rather late getting around? The show is over."

The little man scowled, but deigned no questioning reply to this enigmatical remark. Peter halted him by the simple expedient of blocking his path.

"Merely as a friend," he observed, "I would advise you to go quietly away. Let the bad news reach through the papers. The shock won't be so painful. Oh, well, if you insist—of course! Go on and get it in the face. But have a Winner. It will comfort you."

Mr. Crowder dashed the proffered cigar to the ground and danced up the steps leaving words behind him. Peter sniggered and went on down to the street, and across it to Gus Kolben's. The time had arrived for further converse with that solid citizen.

V

MR. AUGUST BOESCHER wished to talk with Peter on the telephone. It was the Monday following convention week, and Peter was alone in Larkin's office. He had come down late.

"Der count vas finished," rumbled the brewer. "In round numbers der total iss dree hundred seventy-nine thousand bands. Undt say, my poy, I haf already in der morning's mail repeat orders. Undt—yess —" Peter could hear a guttural laugh— "dot Gus Kolben, he delephoned an order. Undt, py golly, der oldt scoundrel breached to me aboudt advertising—says I got to do it! Huh, huh, huh! You come around undt see me, Peter. I got a liddle bresent for you—on a chain. You vind it up, undt it ticks."

When he was through with Boescher, Peter leaned back and twisted lovingly on his finger a three-carat diamond ring. It was a present from the Ionians. He had helped them swell their Charity Fund by over seven thousand dollars. They had smoked up like a house afire and drank beer enough to put it out; and a multitude not of the Order had vied with them, for reasons plainly obvious.

The trade was forced to stock the Winner, and the jobbing-houses sat up and rubbed their eyes—the cigar had been carried off by hundreds of boxes, East, West, North, South, there to be boosted by an army of loyal rooters. Larkin had the cash now to initiate a modest publicity campaign as a follow-up to this flying start, and Crowder's Jingo would have to look to its laurels.

Yes, it had been a killing all right enough, yet Peter was not entirely happy. His time limit had expired with the convention and the Winner sales lacked twenty thousand of half a million. Larkin had not mentioned the matter, and Peter would not broach it; he stood manfully to his dead bluff.

The postman bustled in on his noon delivery. Larkin was upstairs in the factory, and Peter took the mail. There was quite a stack of it—orders they looked like, and Peter smiled. He had lost out, but he still felt a father's pride in the child he had reared.

Then his eye fell on a letter to himself. It bore the imprint of the Crowder Cigar Company. Peter held it in his hand a moment wondering what it was about. He had run across Crowder several times in the convention hall during the past week, but speech had not passed between them. Peter's salutation was a grin, and Crowder's an icy stare. Yet the little man seemed purposely to court these encounters; Peter had caught him once deliberately wheeling in his tracks to meet him face to face.

Peter opened the letter and read it, read it twice. And he laughed. Larkin, coming in from the factory, exploded into jubilations.

"It's a lucky thing, Peter," he exulted, "that you didn't sell the half a million. Judson Davis Company are going to job the Winner. Phoned in an order just now for fifty thousand—rush—and we've got to work overtime to fill it. That twenty thousand we have in stock helps out like the dickens!"

Peter twiddled the Crowder letter in his fingers.

"Great!" he applauded. "I fell down, but don't think I'm kicking. My ten per

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cent. nets me over fifteen hundred dollars, and I guess that'll keep the dogs from barking at me for a while."

"How about this?" demanded Larkin. He drew a paper from his pocket and shoved it at Peter. "I had it drawn Saturday. Got it this morning. I was going to give it to you at lunch when we could talk it over, but I'm feeling too good to wait."

Peter glanced through the document. He got up and put out his hand. His voice was not quite even when he spoke.

"It's fine of you, governor. By George, it is! You've taken me in on equal shares. I didn't expect it, but I'll try——"

"Shut up!" snapped Larkin at him; which is a man's poor way of expressing feeling. "I can't get along without you—and you know it, you confounded, nervy, top-notch selling wonder! Get out of here, and let me check up these orders."

"I'm off," grinned Peter. "But tell me first what you think of this." He laid the Crowder letter before Larkin on top of the pile of orders. It read:

> Sir:
>
> I am about to engage a general sales manager. The salary is four thousand a year. If you are interested, please call.
>
> Yours truly,
> Henry Crowder.

Larkin looked up at Peter, a shade of anxiety in his eyes.

"Well," he asked. "What do you think of it yourself?"

Peter reached over for the letter. He tore it twice across and dropped the pieces in the trash-basket.

"Why," he answered sedately, "the man has more sound sense than I gave him credit for."

THE LADY OF THE TRAIL

BY CHAS. C. JONES

WE ARE first to catch the meaning of the winds that follow free.
Oh, the warm, half-chanting breezes, how they sing!
We can hear and laugh at hearing, though they deal in mystery,
We can march to all the tuneful songs they bring.
We have met them many mornings—vale and mountain, sea and land,
We have answered with the saddle or the sail;
By the Spell of Other Places we have come to understand
All the voices of Our Lady of the Trail.

Now the Lady may be fickle, she may flirt with men at will,
And her lovers may be legion—as they are;
But the man who once upon her looks his all-desiring fill,
He has sent his soul to traffic with a star.
He has done with all ambition, if it bids him calmly stay;
By the clink of traded dollars is he vex't;
He is done with men and methods, he must hasten far away
From Our Lady's one horizon to the next.

Oh, she leads her careless children wheresoe'er it pleases best,
She is careless in her choosing of the track;
She has only need to beckon and we follow, East or West,
For she holds our soul and will not give it back.
There are those who hate Our Lady and the power of her hand,
Call her rule a curse upon us till we die;
And it may be we forgive them that they do not understand,
But, by all the hearts of roving men, they lie!

For we know her, having met her on the ways of all the world.
She has bid us come and gamble for our good;
And her hand was on the spindrift, on the camp-smoke upward curled,
And we would not quit her service if we could.
She has set our hell and heaven, she has been our meat and drink,
She has played us, stayed us, made us—and we know
That our service is our glory; so we do not stop to think,
But we listen till she calls us—and we go!

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The Stronger Call

A Complete Novelette by Robert V. Carr

Author of "The Eagle Mates," "Triplets Triumphant," etc.

IN THE beginning, it may be reasonably supposed, the primitive ancestors of Bill Smith were located in a place where food was plentiful.

Being well fed, they naturally became dominant and aggressive. Being dominant and aggressive, they naturally excelled as fighters. Excelling as fighters, they naturally appropriated the food supply of weaklings, as well as the women of the weaklings. Thus today a man may look at any city directory and find a small army of well-fed, fighting Smiths.

Several million years following the advent of the first Smith, Bill arrived and took to fighting as a duck takes to water. First it was service in the Philippines, and then South Africa, where he aided the Boers and received some honorable wounds. On the South African veld he ran across the proclamation of a British general whose signature was followed by a long string of initials. Possessing a vein of humor, Bill concluded to attach to the rather ordinary name of Smith the initials G. A., which, when expanded, would herald to the world that he was a Genuine American.

Following his South African service he drifted into Central America, where he indulged his warrior soul in revolutionary skirmishes. Tiring of Central America he turned his face to the north, and presently found himself fighting with the Mexican rebels.

Wearying of war, he returned to his own country, and there, after vainly attempting to settle down as a respectable country newspaper editor, he harkened to the call of three former comrades who were preparing to leave for the Balkans. The Balkan affair proved to be more of a trench-digging experience than Bill had anticipated, and, again a victim of the desire to settle down in his own country, he returned to New York. In that regal city he was warmly greeted by a number of adventurers, and even interviewed by a flock of newspaper reporters.

Noting those stories regarding Bill Smith, soldier of fortune, in the New York journals, Henry Courtney, a former New Yorker and friend of the G. A., immediately wrote Bill a long letter in regard to the many opportunities for making money in Angel City, the southern metropolis of the western coast. Courtney urged the soldier to forget war, join him in Angel City and become a real estate speculator. Bill, after due consideration, accepted Courtney's offer, and

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is now discovered leaving his hotel in New York City, bound for the Pacific Coast.

As the G. A., attended by a bell-boy, came out upon the street and approached a waiting taxi, he experienced a sudden and delightful chill. There came to his ears the thunder of drums and the swish and sweep of marching feet. He immediately placed his baggage in the watchful care of the chauffeur, and pressed through the crowd to catch a glimpse of the approaching troop.

Preceded by a mighty drum-corps, with the drum-major gloriously attired and strutting like a turkey-cock, one of New York's splendid National Guard regiments swept into view.

Briskly, snappily, alignment and interval perfect, the companies swept by. Bill knew all about it. He knew the regiment was in a column of platoons, since the narrow street would not accommodate a column of companies. He smiled as a smart young captain turned his head and sternly admonished his company as to "the guide."

He compared the big regiment with some little regiments he had known. He decided that it would behave very well under fire—probably balk and bunch and ball up in the center at first, but as soon as it had looked upon its dead, straighten out and get down to business.

"Have to kill about a third of them to whip the rest into shape," thought the G. A.

He sneered slightly at a dandified major, ablaze with gold braid and bullion.

"That chap certainly doesn't hate himself," he muttered.

The soldier of fortune smiled a little sadly as he compared the garb of certain fighting men he had known with the gorgeous uniforms of the guards. In the field a man was lucky to possess a pair of trousers and a ragged shirt. Why, when he was with the Boers, the whole outfit looked like a collection of scarecrows. And, over in the Islands, you could tell the regiments that had seen service by their faded shirts, their ragged brown trousers and leggings, their grime and whiskers.

When the last guide had passed, the G. A. returned to his taxi. It was then he discovered that he had missed his train.

Now, taking up the matter of cause and effect:

Had Bill's primitive ancestors not been located where food was plentiful, they would not have become red-blooded fighters; had they not become red-blooded fighters, Bill doubtless would not have been a soldier of fortune. Had he not been a soldier of fortune he would not have missed his train to witness a military parade; had he not missed his train, he would not have boarded a train that made connections with a certain Overland Limited out of Chicago.

Had he not boarded that particular Overland Limited out of Chicago, he would not have beheld, daintily ensconced in the section opposite him, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen; and, had he not been baffled by the rules of conventionality, he might not have become interested in the Most Beautiful One.

BILL felt greatly encouraged when he saw her ticket; it was like his, almost as long as a moving-picture film. He reasoned that her destination was some point on the western coast. Feeling that he might desire more positive information concerning her destination, he tipped the porter so heavily that the African breathed audibly and called him "cunnel."

Later he hinted to the porter that he desired to know the destination of the lady in the opposite section. The negro displayed several pounds of ivory, and in the course of time informed the G. A. that her destination was Angel City. Bill then decided that life was not such a dark and gloomy affair after all. It was entirely probable that a lot of things could happen in the time required to journey from Chicago to the coast.

Yet he refrained from performing any of those stunts as set forth in the ritual of the Ancient Order of Train Mashers.

Bill regarded "mashing" as the efforts of an idiot. Better say to a girl frankly and without quibbling:

"I like your appearance, and will do anything short of murder to get acquainted with you."

Yet it was not a good scheme to let any woman know that one was interested in her. No woman who was worth while ever cared for a man who came bleating after her like a pet sheep. No; he, Bill Smith, would show this vision across the aisle that he did not care the snap of his finger whether she looked at him or not.

Yet, considering a certain odd pain in the region of his heart, it would require marvelous mental strength to ignore her. He

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made an attempt to refrain from gazing at her hair and found himself looking at her beautiful hands. He finally concluded that the only way to ignore her was to go back into the buffet car—and stay there.

The Most Beautiful One did not honor the G. A. with a direct glance. But when his head was turned, she card-indexed all his points; the rest of the time she studied his reflection in her window, pretending that she was interested in the scenery.

Bill gave her every opportunity to study him. He made several unnecessary trips to the buffet car, and even swaggered up and down the aisle that she might note he was not an anemic scrub. It is to be feared that he was mortally wounded.

But she gave him no encouragement. The hours sped by—the golden, precious hours.

Night, and hanging of green curtains by white-jacketed porter.

Bill sought the observation platform and was immediately trapped by a maiden lady from Ohio. She approved of his wide shoulders and trim waist. Also, she was desirous of talking some unfortunate to death. She told him her life's history, as well as the history of the various branches of her family. As a side issue she gave an interminable account of a girl who left her home town for the pitfalls and snares of New York City, and, while in that headquarters of sin, married "one of them low-down millionaires."

She wanted to know if Bill was married; if so, how many children? If not married, Why? Bachelor, widower or divorcé? Was he traveling under his real name? Had he ever been in prison? Was there any insanity in his family?

She was just getting into full cry when Bill arose and sought his berth. He had endured bitter hardships in camp and field but there was a limit to all things.

As he sank back on the little pieces of iron ore which an imaginative sleeping-car corporation designated as pillows, he breathed a prayer of thankfulness that he was not married to the lady from Ohio. Better to die on the field of action than to be talked to death.

He felt greatly provoked at the Most Beautiful One. She might have had the kindness of heart to have saved him from the Ohio phonograph. How easy it would have been for her to have found a seat next to him and commented upon the stars hanging like magic lanterns in the clear sky! Instead of that, she had wasted all that precious time in sleep.

At breakfast the vision was even more entrancing than at first sight. She had a choice of two tables, Bill's and that of a little, wizened old man who was a professor in some eastern college. She seated herself at the professor's table. It was maddening.

Later in the day Bill so far forgot himself as to lean toward her slightly and mumble something in reference to the weather. But she displayed no interest in climatic conditions; she merely lifted a perfect hand and tucked back a stray ringlet.

A rage against a world that insisted upon pin-headed conventionalities surged up in the heart of the G. A. Of course she was justified in that farthest north attitude, but then——

He proceeded to loudly inform the conductor that he hoped they would not lose any time. He was due in Angel City at just such an hour. Had to meet a chap by the name of Courtney—*Henry Courtney.* Did the conductor know such a man?

No, the conductor did not know any one by the name of Courtney.

But those details did not seem to interest her, although Bill thought she had acted just a little startled when he mentioned Courtney's name. However, the net result was an expression which caused him to conclude that she did not care whether he knew ten thousand Henry Courtneys or not. Apparently it was immaterial to her whether he stopped at Angel City or continued on his course and leaped off into the Pacific. Yet, when he turned his head, she would study his profile with her inscrutable brown eyes.

Then the typical train-masher arrived and settled down in the seat in front of Bill. He was arrayed in a check suit; upon him was the sheen of diamonds. Immediately, after a brief inspection of the inmates of the car, he began laying plans to make the acquaintance of the Most Beautiful One.

The masher was a fat, baby-faced, middle-aged man. Bill counted four creases above his collar and labeled him "hog."

The masher lacked originality, for he tried the old magazine stunt. But ere he could address her, Bill leaned forward and spoke close to his porcine ear.

"Cut it out," ordered the G. A. in such a

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deadly whisper that for a moment the masher thought a rattlesnake was loose in the car. "Keep your magazine to yourself."

THE fat man turned a pair of shoe-button eyes upon the soldier of fortune. The expression on the G. A.'s face made him sick at his stomach. Such an expression foretold murder—quick, merciless knife work or strangulation. He did not desire to be knifed or strangled; and so, with shoe-button eyes to the front and little beads of cold perspiration gathering upon his brow, he sought the safety of the buffet car.

Bill sighed his regret. He did not want to show off before her, but he had hoped that the fat man would offer resistance. The G. A. was in that frame of mind when a man welcomes a fight. Two blows would have settled the matter; left to stomach, and a right swing to jaw. Had a third blow been necessary, he would have landed a left smash fair to nose and mouth. But there had been no chance; one could not hit a man who would not put up his hands, or at least talk fight.

There is nothing that so quickly unhinges the masculine intellect as attempting to fathom the contrariness of woman. Only a fool on his way to the alienist will continue such a futile research. Bill Smith, retaining some shred of reason, refused longer to batter his head against the stone wall of her indifference; he merely swore under his breath and waited. And, it may be added, looked at her until he was ashamed of himself.

He could see that she was as intelligent as she was beautiful. None of the mannerisms of the small town fudge-eater about her, nor was she a Broadway flounce. And he was quite sure that she was not a "clinger," who merely wanted a man to support her and permit her to call him "dearie." No, she was a sensible woman. Why, oh, why did she act so confounded chilly?

A horrible thought smote him to earth. Perhaps she was married. With some difficulty he recovered his mental footing. Well, what of it? Granted that she was married, there was such a thing as divorce. Given half a chance, he would— It is to be feared that the G. A. had lapsed into the attitude of his primitive ancestors.

Then came depression—black, hopeless depression. Just his luck to love a married woman. He slumped down in his seat, utterly dejected. He might have braced up had he known that she gave him a swift, surreptitious glance of sympathy and understanding. As it was he gloomed for a time and then glanced at her hands. Hope bloomed anew when he thoroughly convinced himself that upon her white fingers gleamed no wedding-ring. Still, women did not always wear their wedding-rings. Again he slumped.

The long train crawled across the desert, and slid down into the Southern California Eden. Then, when in the limits of Angel City, with her hat coaxed and patted into a satisfactory position, she turned and sweetly addressed Bill Smith.

"It is quite warm," she observed, and smiled adorably.

"Yes," agreed the soldier of fortune, his voice trembling slightly. "And if there is any way I can meet you——"

She turned her head, and he found himself talking to the back of her little hat.

Desperate, he leaned forward and said in a tense voice.

"My name is Smith, and I'll be with Henry Courtney."

But she made no reply. The G. A. resumed his position in the slough of despond.

"It's all off now," he told himself dejectedly. "Might know she wouldn't stand for such talk. Serves me good and well right."

He wished he had remained in New York. What a fat-head Courtney was to drag him across the continent to dabble in his little old mud pies. Real Estate! Bah! Courtney happily married! Bosh! There was nothing to it. There was no happiness in the world.

If he had had enough sense to carry beef to a bear, he would have remained in the Balkans, regardless of his desire to— Come to think of it, what was it that had brought him back to God's country? Was it because his comrades had fallen in the taking of Salonika, and he was lonely? Was it just to get a square meal and go to a show or two? Was it because he was seriously contemplating settling down? Did he really know his own mind?

One thing sure: he wouldn't monkey with Courtney long. He would jump down into Central or South America and start a fuss, and he would——

This thing of worrying about a girl just

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because she had brown hair with gold lights in it, and a broad, low forehead, and a "sassy" nose, and wise-innocent eyes, and the most kissable mouth—whoa, Bill! the desert heat must have turned your head.

Now, it was all perfectly hopeless. She was gliding toward the exit— Suffering mankind, she *is* married!

That fawnface reaching for her traveling bag is *her* husband. Aw, he is kidding her—the pup!

Then a great white comforting thought blossomed in the mind of Bill Smith and exhaled the perfume of a flower of paradise. It was entirely possible that the little whiffet was her brother. He could hardly be a real brother—probably a throw-back. Often on the same stem with a matchless rose a scrubby little bud attempts to bloom.

Then a husband would not kiss her in such a matter-of-fact way. He felt that a husband who would kiss such a woman in a matter-of-fact way should be shot, hanged, and drowned, or, recalling the Blue Book, such punishment as the court martial might direct.

Of course he had not the slightest idea as to her address, but he resolved to devote the rest of his life to ascertaining her house and 'phone numbers.

Yet, considering it calmly, there was no cause to fume and fret. She knew that he was with Courtney; if she cared, she would find a way to meet him. If she did not care, it would be useless to attempt to win her favor. She was the kind who knew what she knew, and had a mind of her own.

Perhaps, womanlike, she had enjoyed torturing him, and would later make amends for her cruelty. He could not find a trace of bitterness toward her; she was justified in ignoring him; it was all his fault. If he never saw her again, he would treasure the memory of her forever.

HE ENTERED a telephone-booth and called up Courtney, who, after a number of "say-it's-good-to-hear-your-voice-again's," informed him that he would "chase down to the station in the car"; and added, before Bill could object, "I'll take you out to the house."

The G. A. decided to head off his tempestuous friend in that "take-you-out-to-the-house" matter; he would put up at a hotel and thus preserve his bachelor freedom. None of that happy-home business for him. It was all very well for Henry to slop over about his wife and his home, but none of that matrimonial mush for an old campaigner.

If Courtney thought he was going to lug him out to his little vine-covered shack and force him to wear his life out in a futile attempt to be proper and polite, and afraid to sneeze without wearing a Maxim silencer, the old boy had another guess coming. He would have his own quarters, where he could prowl and growl to his heart's content. Those newly-married men seldom had any sense; always imagining that they were objects of envy, when, as a matter of fact, they were to be pitied. Poor, blind fools!

Yet he was really glad to see Courtney, and somewhat surprised at the elegance of the car sported by the hustler. They chugged away from the station and were soon in the residence district.

Courtney talked incessantly about real estate values. He jerked his head toward various blocks which he declared had been bought for a song and sold for a fortune. Soon the G. A.'s head was ringing with "acreage," "sub-divisions," "contours," and other real estate expressions.

The soldier of fortune was glad when they reached the Courtney bungalow. Henry ran the machine into the garage, and immediately began to point with pride to his bungalow and pergola.

Bill felt that Henry's bungalow mania was justified. As Courtney opened the great front door, the G. A. caught a glimpse of polished floors, rich rugs, mirrors, leather chairs, and vases of flowers.

Mrs. Courtney, a very ordinary little woman with gentle gray eyes, met her husband with something of a bride's shyness. The hustler flung an arm about her and kissed her.

"This is *the* girl," he announced proudly.

The G. A. bowed and murmured his pleasure in meeting the wife of his old friend. At the same time he wondered why Courtney loved her and why she loved him.

Then Bill became aware of the presence of another woman. She had glided in from an adjoining room. As if coming from a great distance he heard the voice of Mrs. Courtney:

"This is Miss Waithe, Mr. Smith. She has just returned from Chicago. Her parents did not expect her until the first of next

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week, and went away on a pleasure trip. Her brother met her at the train, but was compelled to go out of town on business. So you see we are to have her with us for a few days. We count her as our best neighbor; she is only a few doors away——"

"Why, Bill, you and Hesperia—" the G. A. was pleased with the name—"must have been on the same train!" exclaimed Courtney.

"We were," admitted Hesperia coolly. "I was tempted to speak to Mr. Smith several times—but he looked so fierce and forbidding that I was afraid to shatter the conventionalities."

She gave the G. A. a mischievous flash of her brown eyes.

Bill looked at her helplessly, and then released her hand. Had he been holding it all the time she was talking? Heavens! Was he losing his mind?

"Are you going to remain very long in Angel City?" she innocently queried.

"For years," replied Bill, surprised that he could speak like an ordinary human being.

The Courtneys were moving toward the dining-room. After a little silence she said—

"It was very warm crossing the desert."

"No," he daringly disputed; "or at least I did not find it so. I was never so near frozen in my life."

She smiled her comprehension of the frigidity to which he referred.

"Come on, you two!" roared Courtney. "Time to eat."

The G. A. escorted the Most Beautiful One to a seat at the Courtney board.

Never before had he felt quite so helpless. In all past affairs he had felt perfectly sure of himself. But in this case it seemed that she held the reins. She had, for some mysterious feminine reason, calmly ignored him until the conventionalities were properly saluted. So far as she was concerned, such a person as Bill Smith did not exist until Sentry Propriety, Post Number One, had called:

"Turn out the guard! Commanding-General Conventionality!"

She had done exactly as she pleased, while he had fretted and planned and schemed. All that talk about man being the arranger was the merest bosh; the woman arranged everything to suit herself. Man was merely a dummy that bowed and mewed at her dictation.

It was her will that he suffer doubt and despair, and he had no alternative but to suffer doubt and despair. Although he had shouted to the conductor that he was headed for Angel City to meet a man by the name of Henry Courtney, she had remained calm and indifferent. It was her will that he wait until the tribute exacted by custom had been paid, and he had waited. He had made a lot of noise and false motions, but nevertheless he had waited until it pleased Her Serene Highness to acknowledge that he was on earth.

Then his old bachelor dominance asserted itself. She was beautiful and very clever, but he was too old a bird to be easily snared. In fact he would not contemplate captivity, or the wearing of the invisible chains of love.

This was just a passing fancy. He would linger in her vicinity, but would always retain the power to laugh and say *adios*. The man who stuttered over that word *adios* was lost; he, Bill Smith, would never stutter. He would treat her as he had treated the rest: permit her, if she so desired, to lay her head on his shoulder, and murmur, "Isn't it a beautiful night?" Then, if she assumed an air of ownership, it would be "Farewell, my pretty maid."

"No woman," he firmly concluded, giving his bachelor egotism full rein, "can ever trip me up."

Yet when she turned upon him the full splendor of her wise-innocent eyes he experienced a sinking sensation in the region of his heart, and awkwardly dropped his salad-fork.

II

HESPERIA explained it all one glorious moonlight night, as they rested by the side of a trail that scarred the great shoulder of a mighty mountain that looked down upon Angel City.

Bill had said that he believed it impossible for a real man and a real woman to be friends.

"That is not true in our case, Bill Smith." She uttered the ordinary name with such sweetness as to gild it with romance. "We have been good pals for weeks and weeks and will, I hope, continue to be good pals. I do not quite get your view-point. Surely you do not mean that we can not be friends."

"No, I did not mean that," declared Bill

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fervently. "I mean that a man and a woman could not go along without——"

She interrupted with a little exclamation of discomfort.

"I believe there is a pebble in my slipper."

"Let's see," ordered the G. A., as if speaking to a child.

He drew himself toward her by the boyish process of raising himself up on his hands and heels and lurching backward. Then he dropped down, turned around and tucked his feet under him Turk fashion. She extended a small foot; and, gently clasping the round ankle, he slothfully removed the slipper and shook out the offending pebble.

"I'll bet that feels better," he observed, taking his own time in replacing the slipper.

He stretched out upon his back and turned his head so that he might see her face.

"I don't know so much about this pal business," he demurred gloomily.

She was silent. She raised her face, and the moonlight resting full upon it gave to it the carven beauty of some matchless cameo.

The beauty of her hurt him. Yet there was a nameless something about her that hurt him far more than her beauty. It was an insistent appeal, an appeal that would not be denied. Always was that nameless something calling to him. It was hidden in the tones of her voice, it was back of every gesture, it lurked in every curve and luring contour. And it always hurt him, although he was forced to admit that the pain it inflicted was a pain to be desired.

"Tell me again, Bill Smith," she asked softly. "Why can't we be good friends?"

The G. A. raised up on his elbow and pondered her question.

"I don't just know," he admitted sorrowfully, with the innocence of a man who has made love to many but never felt it. "It seems all right, and then again it doesn't."

She smiled a wise-innocent smile, and scooped up a handful of sand and sifted it through her fingers. Then she brushed her palms together daintily.

He sank back and regarded the star-strewn sky.

"I see no reason why we can't be friends." There was a hint of mockery in her voice. "We have many things in common, except——"

Bill knew just why she faltered. She was thinking about the service. She abhorred all that had to do with danger and death. Always, when he talked of his fighting days, came sorrow to deepen the shadows in her eyes.

Gradually he had ceased to talk of war. He wanted to treat her with the fairness and consideration he would accord a partner. He jested with her about that fateful journey from Chicago to Angel City; he teased her about a certain primness she at times affected; he made no demands that could be construed as the demands of a lover.

Yet, down deep in his heart, he wished that she would not always regard his martial experiences with such sorrowful disapproval. He was willing to concede anything, but he felt that she should be interested in his adventures and deeds. But he was forced to face the truth: she was not interested in anything but that which immediately concerned them. Ancient history held no charms for her. The present, and such of the future as was pleasant, was all that concerned her.

Once on a gala day at the beach she had noticed a scar on his forearm. When he told her that it was a reminder of a wound received in action, she asked for none of the details. She simply touched the scar gingerly, and crooned, "Poor arm, poor arm."

"She is certainly a puzzle," thought Bill. "What she don't like she goes around. Seems to me a friend should be interested in everything a man has done. Seems to me——"

Then certain military matters intruded. He was back in "rookie" days.

It is dark and the monkeys are stirring sleepily among the branches of the trees that guard the parade ground.

A bugle blares briefly. Immediately a tumult breaks forth in the silent quarters. Voices are lifted up in song. Men curse good-naturedly. One comedian calls to his bunkie, "Oh, Clara, I mislaid my buttonhook!" Bayonet scabbards clang and belt-plates clink against rifle-barrels.

Again the bugle sounds, this time trippingly:

> Oh, I can't get 'em up; oh, I can't get 'em up;
> I can't get 'em up in the morning——

A twang-voiced sergeant snarls "Fall in!" Shuffling of feet and thump of gun-butts. Back of the dim figure of the sergeant is the shadowy shape of the officer whose misfortune it is to "take reveille."

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The sergeant is a stickler for details. He brings the sleepy company up to the "right shoulder."

" 'Ten-shun to roll-call!"

The sergeant knows the roll as he knows his own name. The men answer harshly, "Here!" "Hup!" "Ho!" or whatever suits the individual taste in yelps and grunts. As the names are called and answered to, the Springfields drop to "the order."

The sergeant turns briskly to the yawning lieutenant. The non-com. is a better man and more fit to wear the straps than the gaping officer to whom he is reporting; but it is a volunteer outfit, and thus is spotted with many anomalies.

"Com'ny present, 'counted f'r, sir."

" 'Smiss com'ny."

The sergeant, still insisting upon a rigid observance of all rules and regulations, turns to the half-dressed company.

"Por-r-rt *hums!* O-o-o-pen *chambers!* Clo-o-o-se *chambers!* 'Smissed!"

Then a babble of voices; but over it all is heard the sergeant reproving a certain shameless rookie by the name of Bill Smith who had "fell in f'r roll-call 'thout 'nough on to flag a bread-wagon."

"What t'ell you think this is," the non-com. asks the abashed rookie, "a swimmin' school?"

Bill laughed softly.

"WHAT are you laughing about?" she faintly queried, a tinge of jealousy in her tones.

The G. A. dared not to tell her. Even if he told her she would not understand.

"I was just laughing to be laughing, I guess," he slowly replied.

"You were thinking about the past," she accused. "Oh, Bill Smith, don't you know that there is no time like the present?"

"Uh-huh," he reluctantly admitted.

"Why think of the past?" she crooned, as she might to a restless and unreasonable child. "The present—tonight, now—is the only time. We may not always be here—together—Bill Smith."

Then the night and the insistent appeal of that nameless something made a frontal attack upon the heart of Bill Smith and stormed into the citadel. For a second he fought desperately, and then weakly called a truce. He reached over and found her hand, kissed the warm soft palm and placed it against his face.

A mocking-bird far down in the light-gemmed valley thrilled the silence with a rhapsody that was like moonbeams melted into song. A vagrant breeze brought them little gifts of perfume, a breath of orange blossoms, a whiff of eucalyptus, a sniff of some bold little tang of salt air from the ocean that lay beyond the round-breasted hills.

"I am just a soldier," mourned Bill Smith, and released her hand.

He was now fairly sure that he loved her, and was reasonably confident that she loved him; but there was the trap.

Love was a trap. Once in love, a man was no longer his own master. A soldier of fortune, fancy free, could go and come as he pleased. A man in love was a prisoner; and he had a horror of imprisonment. He had not reached the stage where he would welcome all the restrictions that love might inflict. He would reach that stage shortly—that is, if he remained in the vicinity of Hesperia Waithe.

Presently her golden voice broke in upon his somber musings.

"Lift me up, Bill Smith; we must be going back."

He sprang to his feet and assisted her to rise, restraining a sudden and mad desire to take her in his arms. They walked down the trail as two men might walk. Bill found a cigar hidden among some papers in his inside coat pocket.

She came up to him as he paused to light the cigar. In the tiny flare of light her eyes shone like doe's eyes. She blew out the match playfully.

Again he experienced great difficulty in resisting that nameless something.

At the foot of the trail he found an automobile. He promptly chartered the car, although she insisted that she would prefer returning home on the trolley. They had return tickets, and she felt that they should not waste them.

But the G. A., secretly delighted with her attempt to prevent an unnecessary expenditure of his money, would not consider a return to the city in a crowded coach.

"Hop in," he gaily ordered. "Life is too short to fuss about expense. Besides, if we returned on the electric, I might have to give my seat to a woman, and I don't want to take any such desperate chances. Your company's worth at least a million dollars."

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She laughed lightly at his boyish compliment, though secretly acknowledging keen pleasure. Life with Bill Smith was not a matter of dollars and cents. He was a man who needed a wife to look after him—poor, careless boy! He would spend his last dollar for her, if she did not watch—What in the world was she thinking about? They were just pals—just pals.

In a few moments the lights of the town that sprawled at the foot of the mountain were far behind them, and they were gliding down a great avenue lined with whispering eucalyptus trees, whose naked boles gleamed like the polished limbs of giant sentinels.

It was not the first time that Bill had been in an automobile with a girl, but it was the first time that he had experienced diffidence. He recalled a situation identical with the present one, with the quite important exception of the girl's name being Mollie instead of Hesperia. To Mollie he had simply said, "Come here to me;" and immediately her head had found a resting-place on his shoulder.

Why could he not treat Hesperia as he had treated Mollie? Why could he not tell her all those ancient lies men have whispered in the ears of women since Eden?

Gradually he began to see the light. He did not want to treat her as he had treated other girls. He did not want her to become simply one of many; he wanted her to be the Only One.

The appeal of that nameless something seemed to gain strength by her silence. If she would only talk and laugh instead of leaning back in that shadowy corner!

He fought back a desire to clasp her hand, saying to himself over and over again: "I will not—I will not."

For ages, it seemed to him, he fought, struggled and resisted, but silently and with scarcely an effort the nameless something conquered him; and, as if entirely aware of the victory, she drowsily murmured—

"We are good pals, Bill Smith."

"Pals nothing!" he exclaimed in a fierce whisper.

He leaned toward her, groping for her hand.

"Bring on your chains," he told the grinning gods. "I surrender."

But he was not permitted to hand his sword to Love, for at that moment they approached a bungalow wherein some fiend incarnate was torturing a cornet. Bill's ear caught a note or two that reminded him of "taps." Immediately the old pessimistic mood was upon him. Again he was a soldier listening to the wailing notes of "taps." He could see a bugler flaunting his white-corded instrument to a blood-red tropic moon.

Yes, he was a soldier; and a soldier had no business contemplating love and marriage and the settled things of life. This girl was not the kind to make love to and leave. Better stick to the pal proposition. She was right—they were just good pals.

Yet he hated that cornet fiend. He could have returned and rammed the horn down his fool's neck.

As for Hesperia, no attempt will be made to relate her thoughts.

There is, however, no doubt of her ability to play the game correctly. About all a woman has to do is to smile and wait. Like the hen pheasant who calmly watches the male, as he struts and displays his fine feathers, she has only to be patient. Having the universe on her side, she can not lose.

To the G. A. it seemed that the journey had occupied not to exceed ten minutes.

"HERE we are," he announced rather despondently, as the car slowed down in front of the Waithe bungalow. She did not speak, and he laid an inquiring hand on her arm. She gave a little, startled exclamation.

"My goodness, Bill Smith, I must have been asleep!"

She descended from the car, and faced him, swinging her hat. The G. A. was miserably conscious of a blind rage. While he had been suffering everything she had been asleep. By the living gods, that was the way with a woman! But why should he care? She had a perfect right to sleep.

He escorted her to the door and bade her an abrupt good night.

"I have enjoyed the evening," she told him, with a little laugh.

"Glad you did," he flung back over his shoulder.

She unlocked the big door, but did not press the button that would flood the living-room with light. Instead she tiptoed to the window and watched the G. A. as he strode down the walk and entered the car. Then, with a light heart, she sought her

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bedroom. She had discovered that she could make him angry, and what more could a woman ask?

"Beat it," snapped Bill Smith, as the driver reached back and shut the door of the tonneau.

When the G. A. reached his apartments he was angry enough to fight a buzz-saw.

It was positively the last time that he would have anything to do with a woman. Nothing to it. They were all alike. Think they are interested, and later find out they have been asleep. From now on he would be a free man. He would ignore femininity completely and absolutely. A man who had girl on the brain was little better than a drunkard. A drunkard could reform, but a man with girl on the brain was a hopeless proposition. Why, she had said nothing—just slept. She must have thought anything he could say was not worth staying awake to hear. Well, she wouldn't have another chance.

Of course she was a friend of the Courtneys, and he would have to be sociable and all that sort of thing; but no more of that pal foolishness. He would, in the future, treat her as he treated Mrs. Courtney—simply that and nothing more. That was the only safe way—just like he treated Mrs. Courtney.

Then a little voice came cheeping from his subconsciousness—

"Bill Smith, the reason that you are so angry is because you love Hesperia Waithe."

The G. A. sank down in a chair. That was it, all right, all right. He was hooked. In desperation he called to the ghosts of his partners, his bunkies, his pals. He called to them, lest the love of woman overpower him, and he forget what they had been to him. Knowing the love of woman, he could never again know the love of man. No more would he feel the thick press about him, the surge of dominant and reckless souls pressing on through smoke and flame to death and glory.

He called to them and they gathered about him in that snug apartment. There was the freckled-faced, hook-nosed "Red," with his flaming crest and big gray eyes in which danced unholy lights. Came "Skookum," quiet-voiced and loyal to the end. And there was "Blisters," young and lovable, with eyes like a girl's and the heart of a lion. They reached for his hand, names like "saphead" and "slumeater" and "son-of-a-sea-cook," and even a name that he would permit no man to call him unless there was love in his heart.

"Oh, boys," groaned the G. A., "your old pal is up against it—up against it."

Gradually the ghosts withdrew, turning upon him sorrowful faces. He was nothing to them now; he loved a woman. He sprang to his feet, shivering.

He began pacing back and forth, and gradually his mood changed. The poor girl was probably very tired. It had been quite a climb. No wonder she had fallen asleep. He would probably see her tomorrow. He would drop out to the Courtneys' for dinner. Doubtless she would be there—she generally was. A feeling of contentment crept into his heart and soothed and comforted him.

He could now see that he had many things to be thankful for. He had a good start with Courtney, and already had made considerable money. Hesperia might not be greatly interested in him, but she had never refused an invitation to a dinner or an outing. There were other men, men with bundles and bales of money, who would be only too glad to win her favor; but she had turned them all down for her pal, Bill Smith. Who said he had ever been angry with her?

Of course his comrades had all been good chaps and true, but they had little understanding of the higher and better things of life. Really, they were a coarse lot—that is, such of them as were alive. Take Montgomery for example. Montgomery had once said that he had no more regard for a woman than he had for a cat. Still, old Monty was a man; say what you've a mind to, he was a man. Why, the old son-of-a-gun had nursed him through a spell of fever down in a hell-hole south of Panama.

Away with the thoughts of Monty! He would dream about her, the Most Beautiful One. Now suppose they were married. They would have a bungalow on the Courtney order, and a low, rakish automobile. He would have a "buck" room in the house, and he would fix it up with the curios he had gathered in his wanderings and left with various friends.

No, he wouldn't do that. Those belt-buckles and other military relics would remind him of the boys. Well, anyway, they would have a big porch; and on warm

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nights the Courtneys would come over and visit with them.

But suppose that when he was settled down one of his old partners should come drifting in—Montgomery, for example. Lord, that would be fun! He would take Monty out to the house and show him what it was to live. He could see the old cuss grin and stand on one foot. Monty couldn't spring any of that woman-hating stuff with Hesperia. The old boy would have to admit that he was wrong.

Yes, siree. Old Monty would be bound to say, after Hesperia had engineered a fine little dinner, that he was wrong. But he wouldn't rub it into the old scout. He would look around and find some middle-aged widow with a little money, and introduce Monty——

The G. A. suddenly paused in his guard-on-post stride, and looked at his reflection in the mirror.

"What have you been smoking?" he asked his image quaintly. "You must have gotten hold of a new brand of hop."

Then he undressed and sought his bed.

III

THE day following the trip to the mountain found the G. A. careless of business. Courtney was obliged to remind him that he acted like a man whose foot was asleep. Bill worried along until about three o'clock, and then, sighing deeply, telephoned Hesperia.

Was she coming down-town? Certainly; had a little shopping to do. Where would she meet him? Any place he designated. He designated a place.

As Bill hung up the receiver he was conscious that Courtney was studying him with his shrewd little eyes.

"You and Hesperia seem to have made a hit with each other," observed the hustler benignly.

Bill gave the little man no encouragement; he could see no particular benefit in a discussion of a self-evident fact.

But Courtney was not to be side-tracked.

"One of the nicest girls I know of," he went on. "A little past twenty-two, and with a fine mind. She is entitled to a good man, an A-number-one husband, that girl. And believe me, she can pick and choose. No foolishness about her, either. You may know it and you may not, but that girl is one of the wisest little kids you ever saw.

"And take her and the missus together, and it is good-night to the man who don't ring true. Several times, before closing a piece of business, I've taken a party out to the house and let Hesperia and the missus look him over. If they said he was O. K., I went ahead; if they said he made no hit with them, I dropped him quick."

As a match-maker Courtney's work was what he would have described as "a trifle coarse," but his heart was located in the right place.

"And for disposition—aside from Mrs. Courtney, I don't know of a girl that can keep in sight of Hesperia. She hasn't much of a family—just ordinary folks, as you know, but there is never a cross word in that house. Even that scrub brother of hers is a pretty fair sort of a kid when Hesperia is around."

Bill felt compelled to shut off the flow of natural gas.

"I can see all those things, Henry, without having my attention called to them." There was a trace of irritation in his voice. "There is nothing that is good in the world but what I can see that Miss Waithe has more than her share of it."

"Can that 'Miss Waithe' stuff, Bill," snapped Courtney. "You can't come *none* of that old stuff with me. I have eyes in my head. Now go on and keep your date."

Bill was forced to grin.

"Do you know what you're grinning about?" asked Courtney in pedagogue fashion.

"No," admitted Bill, meekly.

"Well, I do," declared the little man; "and don't drive me too far or I'll tell you."

To save his life the G. A. could not control his features. He must grin.

"I see that I must tell you a few things, old foxy Bill."

Courtney rose and came over to the G. A., and looked down at him with the expression of a judge delivering a weighty opinion.

"You're hooked and don't know it."

"Hooked?" echoed Bill, pretending innocence.

"Yes; *hooked*. You can't fool me for a minute. You think a great deal of Hesperia."

"Well——"

"Don't 'well' me, Bill. You're gone and gone right. Aside from that, you're mighty lucky. She is one girl in a million; and if

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I know my left hand from my right, she likes you. There is nothing to hinder you two from——"

Bill rose and hurriedly sought his hat.

"I guess I'll be drifting. May possibly be out to the house tonight," he told Courtney, who was making a futile attempt to finish his match-making talk. "*Adios.*"

Courtney plumped down in his chair.

"Sometimes I think I understand that son-of-a-gun," he muttered, reaching for a cigar, "and other times I think I don't. He's a funny proposition, that Bill Smith; but square, thank the Lord—square as they're made."

The little man then plunged into a mass of papers.

Bill was on time to a second, but was forced to fidget for several minutes before Hesperia arrived. She came up to him with a murmured apology.

"I know I am late, Bill Smith, but I couldn't help it."

"Well, what'll we do?" He looked down at her quizzically. "I report for orders."

"We might go to a moving-picture show," she suggested.

"No sooner said than done," he returned in blithe acquiescence.

He was conscious of a foolish and unreasonable pride in her appearance. She wore a quaint little hat surmounted by a saucy feather. Her suit met with his entire approval. Even the tight skirt that forced her to walk mincingly found complete favor with the G. A. She was beautiful, and had a divine right to accentuate that beauty.

The G. A. looked upon a beautiful woman in much the same way as he would a handsome man or a lovely child. He recalled how a certain regular sergeant of his acquaintance used to have his jackets made so tight that it seemed no human being could live and breathe in one of them. The sergeant was proud of his square shoulders, his flat back and slender waist. Bill was much like that regular army sergeant; he had the military man's love of grace and style.

He was glad that men and women turned to look at Hesperia. She was worth looking at. Men and women do not turn to look at a woman unless she is beautiful or ridiculous; and there was not the remotest chance for any one to consider Hesperia's appearance ridiculous. She was beautiful, and the world was forced to admit it.

GUIDING her through the crowd, he approached the blazing entrance of a great moving-picture theater. Presently they were comfortably seated in a vast, grotto-like room.

"Great guns!" he thought happily. "What a pal she is."

The first of a war drama flashed upon the screen. The opening scenes were humdrum enough—the old story of a Southern girl in love with a Northern officer. But the battle scenes were thrillingly realistic, and had cost a fortune.

Bill Smith leaned forward, body tense and hands clutching the back of the seat in front of him. He muttered professional comments that the girl at his side did not understand.

"Poor advance—poor advance. They should make it by rushes. What's that sergeant doing with a sword? Huh! Second lieutenant of infantry wearing field officer's saber. Well, wouldn't that jar you! They're using breech-loaders for a Civil War scrap."

Now out of the distant woods is vomited a gray mass. Above the smoke tosses a flag—a starry cross showing upon its folds. The gray mass rolls up against the black line and recoils. Their officers rave among them, beating them into some semblance of formation. Again the gray mass rolls up against the black line, and a hand-to-hand fight ensues.

A bearded face, savage and exultant, mad with the battle lust, flashes upon the screen. A marvelous actor!

"Why in the name of God don't they flank them?" breathed the G. A. in a hoarse whisper, forgetful of time and place.

Ah, that was the intention. The attack on the center was merely a diversion.

The picture spreads out magically, and a gray blot appears on the right of the black line and explodes suddenly like a bunch of giant firecrackers.

A mounted officer dashes up in the rear of the black line, now beginning to bunch and waver. He curses and raves, and his horse rears high in the air. Already the center is broken and the right flank is crumbling.

"They're gone," said Bill Smith calmly, "unless reinforcements come up. The Johnny rebs have got 'em."

But, lo, the reinforcements arrive in the nick of time. Must be a drilled outfit. They swing in and present a flaming,

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smoking front to that gray mass on the right. With its flank protected the black line straightens out and flings back the force attacking its center. Many prisoners are taken and shunted rapidly to the rear.

The gray masses fall back sullenly. Here and there individuals halt to fire vengeful parting shots.

"They should have some cavalry to follow up their advantage," declared Bill. "Got 'em on the run, ought to keep them going."

Far away he heard a woman's voice. Was she addressing him? Then he awoke.

"I have spoken to you several times," said Hesperia with sweet patience, "but you were so absorbed in the picture that you did not answer."

"I am sorry," he returned gently, but not apologetically.

He was again the soldier of fortune. What was this life as compared to that which the moving-picture company had attempted to portray? What had he, Bill Smith, G. A., to do with the humdrum life of the money-grabber?

"If you don't mind," he told her sorrowfully, "I would like to move on." Then, ashamed of his rudeness, "But if you want to stay——"

"Just as you desire, Bill Smith."

Not for worlds would he have admitted it, but at that moment her presence was oppressive to him. He wanted to get back into the man life. She was beautiful and good, but she never could understand the man view-point—the fighting man's viewpoint. She was content to blend with nature. He was restless and unreasonable, forever leaping at the unattainable stars.

The green grasses, the soft earth and the mothering summer in some valley of Eden called to her; but to him the bleak mountain tops cried fierce challenge and he longed to brave the steeps.

By acquiring an utter disdain for the physical, a contemptuous disregard of wounds, torture and lingering death, he had hoped to—aye, was always hoping—to glimpse some veiled ultimate. For ages the bright blades had flashed on high, signaling the splendid endeavor of dominant masculinity. Could a man who had known the life wherein, in a brief five minutes, is packed a dozen ordinary lives—could such a man be content with the humdrum—the paddling to and fro from house to office, from office to house—love of woman, children?

No, it was impossible. He had thought that he might make a go of it, regardless of failures in the past. He was simply a soldier of fortune. The service was calling again, and the voice of it was infinitely alluring. He would go back; it was inevitable.

He had supposed Hesperia to be different from other women, but after all she was like the rest. She wanted to possess him, to control him, to own him. She could not endure his thinking of things in which she had no share. She wanted to be a part of him—in his thoughts always.

That was the way with womankind; always wanting something. It was not so with men. If a man had a partner he liked, he asked very little of him. Partnership between real men was easy, comfortable and stable. Partnership between a man and a woman was something that had to be eternally watched and coddled.

He would erase certain memories, and return to the old free life.

THEY came out on the street, blinking with the sudden change from dusk to vivid sunlight. They walked along rather aimlessly.

Finally he said—

"I just can't explain; but if you will let me leave you at the corner, I'll——"

"Why, certainly," she interrupted. "I intended to do some shopping anyway. It will be perfectly all right, Bill Smith."

They halted at the corner.

"We are good pals, you know," she reminded, smiling up at him; "and pals do not make demands. Good-by."

Suddenly clutched by contrition, he started after her; and then a brown, lean hand descended upon his shoulder, and a voice out of the old turbulent past shouted:

"Bill, you old *hombre*, how goes it?"

The G. A. swiftly turned to confront a lean, erect individual with a knife-scar decorating his cheek. The scar and the exceptionally high cheek-bones gave to his black eyes, in spite of the friendly lights now dancing in them, the fierce, implacable look of a Sioux Indian.

"For the love of —— *Montgomery!*"

They shook hands for a long time, looking each other over with keen eyes that

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were schooled to read the signs that hardship writes upon the flesh.

"You're looking fine," declared Bill. "Let's get out of this mob and go some place and get a drink. Lord, Monty, I'm glad to see you. Where you from?"

"Everywhere," replied Montgomery. "I've been doing the States." He placed an affectionate hand upon the G. A.'s shoulder. "Lead on; these pavements have killed my feet, and I'm dry as an old sponge."

Bill led the way to a convenient saloon. They settled down in an upholstered booth and called for drinks.

"Now tell me about yourself," the G. A. eagerly demanded. "I was thinking about you only last night. Talk; I'm loco to hear what you've been doing."

Montgomery drank his whisky and soda, and lighted a cigarette.

" 'Tis this way," he began. "Since I saw you last I have been trotting over the world taking things easy. I got in with an English outfit on a placer deal about three hundred miles north of where you had the fever.

"It was rich, Bill; and I cleaned up a lot of money. Everything was quiet south of Panama, and I concluded to run around and enjoy life for a time. I was over to Paris, but tired of it. I was in New York just after you left. I run across some of the boys there, and they told me about your hiking for this town.

"From New York I slid down to New Orleans and run across a bunch of old-timers. They hinted of something doing with Don Pedro, and I left 'em a follow-up card and run up here. I hadn't been here three days before I got a letter from Del Pilar, who, as you know, is close to Don Pedro. Pilar writes me to hike south as fast as train and boat will carry me.

"Don Pedro has everything in shape now to grab the presidency. He has three thousand Mausers and a thousand Remingtons, as well as some rapid-firers. Of course the information was buried deep in the letter, but I got it all right, all right. Pilar is a good *amigo*, and I can have anything within reason.

"I have been trying to locate you ever since I landed here, but you know there is a regiment of Smiths in this town. It was just pure luck that I run across you. Now, the question is: will you go south with me and throw in with Don Pedro? You know the old boy and know that he is square. This time he will win. The country is dead set against Hastro, and there will be nothing to it. The affair is timed for the first of the month. We will just have time to make it in good shape, if we start tomorrow. Will you go?"

The G. A. gave a little groan. Here was the situation that he had ardently desired, but now that he confronted it he felt like a man who had the choice of being shot or hanged. To refuse to accompany Montgomery would necessitate an explanation, and the grim fighter could not be placated with lies or soft excuses.

Could he tell him that he was in love? There, he had admitted it. He *was* in love! But could he tell this stark fighter? He could see the contemptuous sneer dawn in those fierce, implacable eyes. The god of Montgomery was the god of war, and men who refused to fight when the opportunity offered he classified as cowards. A man was either a coward or a brave, according to the Montgomery code.

Bill's soul sickened at the thought of babbling to this dauntless warrior of money-making, business, bungalows and housekeeping.

"Suppose I say to him," he said to himself, in a blind endeavor to find a trail out of the dilemma, "suppose I say, 'Monty, I have met a girl whom I have learned to love. I have a fine start in business, and have every reason to believe that she will marry me, if I say the word. I do not believe I care to take the chance in a revolution. I prefer staying here and marrying the girl and becoming a good citizen.' What would be Montgomery's reply? He would doubtless get up, and remark very politely: 'Sorry to have bothered you. Wish you good luck. *Adios.*' "

No, that sort of stuff would not go with Montgomery. Regardless of past service, the gaunt Scot would consider him what is known as a "cold-foot." Here was a chance to see some more fighting, a first-class chance. What could a first-class fighting man do but thank his stars for the opportunity.

"What's the matter, Bill?" asked Montgomery gently. "Haven't you the price of a ticket?"

"Yes," the G. A. managed to reply. And then, before he could put on the brake,

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his lips framed four words, "I am your man."

Montgomery heaved a sigh of relief, and smiled a most engaging smile.

Said he:

"I thought for a moment that you were strapped, and wondering how you would make it. Man, man, you should know that I am filthy with coin, and you're welcome to it. Well, then that's settled. We'll leave tomorrow. That leaves us with a night on our hands. What say you to a little quiet celebration? We may not have the chance again."

"Whatever you say, Monty." The G. A. spoke as a man who is suffering fine torture.

"Now for a good dinner," cried the Scot; "and then a night of it."

But there was little ginger in the walk of the G. A. as they left the saloon. They sought a cafe and ordered recklessly. But Bill did not enjoy the meal. It seemed to him that eating was the habit of fools.

They drifted out on the street, Montgomery talkative and craving excitement, the G. A. silent and sad.

For a time they stood on the edge of the curbing and watched the constant procession of automobiles.

"LOOK at that!" cried Montgomery. "The queen in the purple car. What would such as you or I do with her? That buggy cost five thousand at least, and I'll bet she's got on two thousand dollars' worth of stuff. That's the woman of today for you, Bill. Some poor sucker of a man is killing himself to support her, and she's riding around with her hands folded.

"I have seen 'em all over the country, and they're all the same. Count me out, Bill, count me out. I don't mind a few moments of buying wine and talking the old talk, but never will one of those dames load herself onto me. I have lived too long."

"But, Monty," objected the G. A. weakly, "you forget that the man who is paying the bills might love her—the one in the purple car."

"Yes, and he might be a fool, too," was the sneering rejoinder. "It's a cinch that dame don't love the chap who is putting up for her. She may pretend that she loves him as long as he produces. I wouldn't have one of them as a gift. They're all gold-diggers. Look at that old trollop in the green car. See the way she looks at the crowd. She thinks she is the real thing. Look how she is fixed up. And it is some man who is digging for her, but his name isn't Montgomery."

"But, Monty, women can't work."

"I'll admit that, Bill. But they can tell the truth, if they would. South of Panama they don't dodge the fact; they say that they belong to their men and let it go at that. Up here they are yelling for equality and to be bought and cared for all in the same breath.

"They make me weary, Bill. I never did have much use for a woman. For straight goods give me a man every time. This country is woman-crazy. Pick up a magazine and it's girl, girl, girl. Pick up a newspaper, and it's all skirt. The men have become soft, thinking about and working for women. In case of war with a power that keeps its women where they belong, you would see what I mean. I'm for men, Bill."

In spite of his intimate knowledge of Montgomery's character the G. A. was shocked at the man's frankness. He knew that there lived no man who was more generous than Montgomery, no man who was more tender-hearted. He knew that the Scot would give a friend his last dollar, or shed his heart's blood for a woman or a child. Yet, haunted by the sweet ghost of Hesperia, Bill experienced some difficulty in condoning the frank and even brutal opinions of his friend.

"Let's take in a show," Montgomery suggested.

"All right." The G. A. was wondering what Hesperia was doing, and his "all right" lacked enthusiasm.

They found seats close to the orchestra.

"Now, what did I tell you," sneered the Scot. Here's the best show in town, and it's all girl. By the way, look at that little blonde on the end of the front row."

Bill looked—wearily.

"I think I'll have an usher slip her a note. She can bring along a friend."

The G. A. was silent. He could not assume an air of sanctity and tell Montgomery that he did not now care for such things. The Scot would probably lift his black brows, and murmur—

"Since when has Bill Smith become a Sunday-school boy?"

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Montgomery proceeded to write the note, and, wrapping it around a dollar, passed it to an usher.

The usher returned shortly, and informed Montgomery, "All O. K." Then Bill Smith found his voice.

"Look here, Monty, I want you to enjoy yourself, but this sort of thing doesn't appeal to me any more. Do me a favor and cancel this date. I'm sick of such stuff."

His comrade flashed him a keen glance.

"You talk like a man who had settled down with his mind on *a girl*, instead of *the girls*. Look at it right, Bill. We'll take those señoritas out to supper ——"

"Not me," declared the G. A. decisively.

"Oh, very well. We won't quarrel about it, *amigo*. If you won't go through, we might as well pass up the rest of the show. What next?"

"I should say that we'd better turn in. We will have to get up pretty early, and we won't feel much like it if we prowl all night. I have some business to close up in the morning."

The G. A.'s face was moody, and he refused to meet his friend's searching gaze.

"I don't know what is the matter with you, Bill," the Scot said in slow, puzzled tones, "but you're not the man I used to know. Bed at ten o'clock! Man alive, you act like—blamed if I know what you do act like."

"You might come up to my rooms for a while," suggested Bill.

"Have you anything to drink?"

"Yes."

"Lead me to it, my chorus-girl-hating friend."

Montgomery made many sneering comments upon the various women they passed on their way to Bill's apartments, but the G. A. did not hear them.

Out of his heart came a little prayer.

"I believe there are pure, unselfish women in the world. I ask for the strength to believe that there is more good than evil in the world. I believe there is a higher, better life—a life wherein a man does only the things that he should do, thinks only the thoughts that he should think. I believe there is a courage superior to mere physical courage—the courage to do right. And I believe in love."

"Gad," broke in Montgomery, "but 'twill seem good to get back in the green country again and hear the Mausers *plack-placking*, and smell gun smoke."

The G. A. could have struck him to earth. Why had he not kept his cursed mouth shut? It was just like him to jerk a man back into the muck of reality.

The G. A. welcomed his friend to his apartments perfunctorily. He dragged a table to the center of the little living-room and placed thereon whisky and soda. Immediately Montgomery poured out a stiff drink and gulped it down. Bill, now in a frame of mind that was far from jovial, merely sipped the liquor.

"Make yourself easy, Monty," he invited quietly.

Montgomery proceeded to divest himself of coat, collar and shoes.

"A tidy little place you have here," he commented, pouring out another drink. "You must be in good shape——"

The clangor of the telephone-bell interrupted him.

THE G. A. jerked down the receiver, and his heart gave a curious leap as he realized that it was Hesperia talking.

"Thought I would call up and see if you still felt gloomy. How are you feeling, Bill Smith?"

There was no mistaking the caressing tones of her voice. She had been worrying about him, that was plain—very plain. She could not sleep until she knew that he was all right.

"Fine, fine," lied the G. A., but his voice did not ring true. He waited for her to speak.

"Good night, Bill Smith——"

He knew that she was waiting for him to speak—waiting for him to say a few words that would hint of a desire to see her tomorrow.

"I am going away," he wrenched out, his lips close to the transmitter.

It was done; he could not now recall his words. He had told her; it was finished.

"Where?" came the faint query.

"Central America."

Distinctly he heard her catch her breath in a sudden sob.

"Is this not all very sudden?" She could not stifle the exclamation that burst forth from her lips following the conventional inquiry. "Oh, Bill Smith!"

"I have not told Courtney yet," he

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went on, beset with conflicting emotions. "But I am going back to the old life. I will see you tomorrow—to say good-by."

"Oh, Bill Smith," he heard her sob; and then a little click told him that she had hung up the receiver.

For a time he stared down into the transmitter, and then, with a groan, turned from the instrument to find Montgomery looking at him affectionately.

" 'Tis not my way to pry into a friend's affairs; but, Billy lad, was it a lass you were talking to?"

"It was," replied the G. A., and flung himself down on the bed and buried his face in the pillow.

The moments passed, and softly Montgomery helped himself to the whisky. For ages Bill Smith struggled and suffered and endured. He would not go South—no, no, he had promised Montgomery. He would not leave Hesperia. But that would never do—he was a soldier.

Presently sleep came to him and soothed him into forgetfulness. He dreamed that he and Hesperia were out in the mountains and that she looked up at a great, luminous star and murmured—

"Even after that star is no more, I will love you, Bill Smith."

"Poor lad," commiserated Montgomery. "He loves a lass."

He unlaced the shoes of Bill Smith and threw a light cover over him, for after all Montgomery possessed a heart of gold.

"Yet a man must be a man," thought the Scot. "I am counting on Bill Smith to go through, regardless of the lass or aught that concerns his heart. He is a man's man. 'Tis a shame to let good whisky go to waste. I'll have another, thank ye. Well, here's to war——"

He began crooning a ditty:

I left her and I marched away,
  Her tears upon me shoulder.
Thinks I, She always will be true
  To her own darlin' soldier.
I fought in twenty battles, sir,
  In foreign service tarried;
And then returned to find that she
  A grocer clerk had married.

IV

BILL SMITH awoke an hour before dawn. Montgomery had considerately turned off the lights, but his cigarette glowing redly testified to his wide-awakeness.

"Turn on the lights," requested the G. A. sleepily.

The Scot arose and pressed the white button. Bill, blinking in the sudden glare of light, cursed softly.

"Well might you swear," commented Montgomery. "You've had a hard night of it, with your groaning and moaning and talking in your sleep. Better throw a slug into you. You look like you'd died and been dug up."

The G. A. arose and contemplated himself in the mirror.

"You're right, Monty."

"Tip a drink into you," ordered the Scot. "I've something I want to say to you."

Bill obeyed the order, and then slumped down in a chair, hiding his face in his hands.

"I release you from your promise to go South with me," the Scot said earnestly. "You're no fit man to go into a shindy. From what you have been talking in your sleep, I should say that you were up to your ears in love. A man with the voice of a woman calling to him has no place on a firing-line."

Bill launched an inane query—

"What did I say?"

"Better ask me what you didn't say," growled Montgomery. "One minute you were loving her and the next minute you were executing right forward fours right, and once you got into close quarters with somebody and cursed till I was thinking I would have to throw a bucket of water on you."

The G. A. braced up and looked his friend fair in the eyes.

Said he:

"No matter what I said in my sleep, I am going South with you. You don't think I'd kick out at this stage of the game, do you? Besides, I want to see a firing-line again. It goes as it lays, *amigo mio*."

"Bill Smith is himself again," laughed the Scot, lifting his black brows.

"And I might as well begin packing," the G. A. continued. "We can take the first train out."

He proceeded to gather up his possessions and pile them in a heap on the bed.

"Crazy man—crazy man," commented Montgomery. "Loco with love."

"Crazy man or not," snapped Bill peevishly, "you know there is no use sticking around here any longer than we have to."

"How about your business, Bill—and the

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girl?" Montgomery was very serious now. "Don't be a fool. 'Tis bad enough to have one fool in the party; don't make it two. If you must be bull-headed and go with me whether I want you or not, be decent and say *adios* to the girl. She's entitled to a good-by."

"I'll write a letter," grumbled the G. A., hurling some toilet articles at the heap of rumpled garments on the bed. "I'll write everybody a letter. I hate these good-bys. All I need is some money, and we can get that as soon as the bank opens. You'd better get over to your quarters and pack."

"Little I have to pack except a letter of credit and a six-shooter. Is your mind set on going with me?"

"It is."

The Scot proceeded to draw on his shoes.

"All I have to say is that whoever the girl is, she's lucky to be rid of you. A crazy man is no use as a husband."

The G. A. began stuffing a traveling-bag with whatever was nearest at hand.

"Trot along, Monty!" he cried with assumed light-heartedness. "I'll be with you in two shakes."

At the door, Montgomery turned and looked back sadly.

"'Twould 'a' been better had I never met him," he muttered. Then in brisk military fashion, "Report for duty in an hour."

"You're right I will," came the emphatic reply.

With the departure of Montgomery, Bill began a feverish search for pen, ink and paper. Finding those necessary articles, he proceeded to address a letter to Miss Hesperia Waithe.

"My Darling Sweetheart," he commenced, and then tore the paper into fine bits. Then he wrote "Dearest Girl," and again tore the paper into fine bits.

"I'll just make it 'Dear Hesperia,'" he murmured, and thus he wrote:

DEAR HESPERIA:

I know that this letter will surprise you, as I promised to say good-by in person. But, as a good pal, I think you will understand. All my life I have hated good-bys. Now, as a good pal, I ask you not to think that I feel any different toward you. I am just the same—only more so. I will always remember the good times we had together.

I am going South with an old partner of mine by the name of Montgomery. We expect to take part in a little affair down in Central America, but, as you are not interested in soldiering, I will not bother you with details. We expect to get out on the first afternoon train, and there is just a chance that we will leave this morning.

I want you to think of me as a man who——

At this point the G. A. held his pen to the paper so long that it made a huge blot.

Excuse the blot. I want you to think of me as a man who would—that is, who will never forget you. I am a poor letter-writer, and do not know of much to say anyway. You will probably hear from me once in a while. I am thinking that I will send you some of the embroidery work done by the natives.

And, Hesperia, please forgive me for not—oh, for any of the things I have done that you did not just exactly like. *Adios*, little pal.

Ever your friend,

BILL.

P. S.—We go from here to New Orleans.

For a long time he stared at the postscript. He wanted to write a lot of lover-like nonsense, but some way he could not bring himself up to the point of action.

Sighing heavily, he folded the letter and slipped it into an envelope.

His letter to Courtney was brief and to the point. He told the little man to act for him in any future business transaction as he would for himself. He practically made Courtney a gift of his share in the business.

If there is anything coming to me (wrote the soldier of fortune) you can turn it over to Miss Waithe. If she refuses to accept it, keep it for the young Courtneys. Henry, I simply can not stand this humdrum life. I would come up and say good-by, but see no use in talk. You know that I will always be your friend, and that is all I could say. The fact is that you can not make a business man out of a soldier. I wish you every good thing in the world.

HE SEALED the two letters and placed them in his inside coat pocket, resolving to mail them at such a time as would preclude all possibility of Courtney heading him off at the station.

Though the affair was now settled, the sweet ghost of Hesperia must rise to haunt him. Confound it! Why was love, or friendship, or whatever you might call it, such an insistent thing? If it was love, what was the purpose of it all? Was a man like the coral insect that loves, labors and dies that other insects may love, labor and die? Why bother with love and labor? Why not take the short cut through rifle-flame?

Being unable to answer his own questions, he gathered up his luggage and sought

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the elevator. The lift came droning up, engineered by a sleepy night-clerk.

The G. A. paid his room rent, and plunged out into the cool, sweet dawn. He was on his way. Again in thought he saw the steaming valleys, the great, green hills, the still-flowing tropic rivers, the country where death steps on the heels of life.

He found his friend waiting in the hotel lobby, deserted save for a clerk, and a Jap busy with mop and brush.

"Come on," ordered Montgomery briefly. "You need not wait for money; I have plenty for both. If you need more, you can get it at New Orleans; I know a banker there who will cash your personal check. A train leaves in thirty minutes."

"We hike," said the G. A. "We will eat when we can."

At the station they found that they had been misinformed as to the time of departure of the train for New Orleans. They would have to wait.

"What fools we are—what fools!" exclaimed Montgomery bitterly. "We will now have to hang around this cattle-shed for years."

"We might go back up-town, and get something to eat," Bill suggested. "Our taxi's left. Pity that that driver could not have told us about the train."

"I should have known," grumbled Montgomery. "But I never could read a time-table. I speak four languages and seven dialects, but God help me, I can't read an American time-table. Did you bring the booze along? No; well, thank Heaven, I have some sense left. I have a quart in my bag."

They seated themselves, and proceeded to make the best of the situation.

"We'll pass up the chow till we get on the train," decided the Scot. "I can live for forty days on whisky and cigarettes."

He took a big drink and passed the bottle to Bill, who declined with a wave of his hand.

Montgomery laughed, or rather barked: "You're in bad shape—bad shape. But 'tis like all men get once in a while."

He replaced the bottle in his traveling-bag, and slid down in his seat. The harsh lines in his face softened, and his voice took on a deep and tender cadence.

"Here I am, Bill, forty-three years of age—at least ten years ahead of you. And what am I? Nothing but an old drifter, hoping, praying for my bit of lead. I had my chance for happiness once, but I let it pass.

"She was a half-caste, but a very noble woman. We did not go near the priest. There was a boy—my boy.

"Ah, but he was a fine lad, with his daddy's back, if I do say it, flat and straight. And the grip of him—'twas like iron. He was that strong that he would almost jump out of my arms when I was holding him. I think of her and the lad always, but seldom talk as I am talking now.

"I craved excitement. I left her and the boy in a dirty hell-hole of a town and went out in the first revolution. A bunch of the insurrectos jumped the town while I was gone, and she and the boy got in the way of the lead. Anyhow, I was childless and wifeless when I returned.

"I put in a year evening up the score. I must have got fifty of the devils before I stopped. I lay out in the jungle like a black puma and gave no mercy nor quarter. Oh, Bill, you don't know how I have suffered. You have never lost a son."

The G. A. gazed at Montgomery as if the man had suddenly become another being. The Scot had spoken of women sneeringly, and was plainly not a moral man. But here he was, his voice trembling, his scarred cheek wet with tears.

Bill laid a hand on the arm of his friend.

"Monty," he said softly, "you may yet——"

"No!" cried Montgomery hopelessly. "A man loves only once. I have loved and lost. I can only wander over the world pretending I do not care. But I do care—I *do* care."

The G. A. felt that he must put forth a question.

"Tell me, Monty. If you had it to do over again, would you leave her and the boy for a scrap?"

Montgomery straightened up in his seat.

"Listen to me, Bill, and know the truth. For her and the boy, now, I would give up anything in the wide world—glory, country, my self-respect as a soldier, anything. I would turn coward for her and the lad, and have men laugh at me for a dirty, cold-footed sneak. There is nothing that I would not do.

"That is why I released you from your promise. At first I thought you had a passing fancy for some light-headed señorita, but in your sleep you told me different.

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She must be a rare, sweet woman. Bill, old friend, 'tis not too late now. Go back to her and tell her that you're sorry you ever thought of leaving her. Might I ask what she looks like?"

The G. A. found no difficulty in describing Hesperia Waithe.

"I should say," he began, in a low voice—and, oh, how reverently Montgomery listened—"that she was about five feet six. Her hair is brown with a sort of golden light in it; and her eyes are brown, too. And her nose, Monty, is a clever little nose, for she is a girl with a mind of her own. Her mouth is the mouth of a good woman, and when she smiles there is a little trail like a drawn-out dimple running from the corner of her mouth up to her nose.

"Her disposition is that of an angel. She is wise and yet innocent. The first time I saw her, I felt——"

"A pain; a real pain in the chest," eagerly supplied Montgomery.

Bill nodded.

"Well, then, you have the real thing," concluded the Scot decisively. " 'Tis a pain that is of the mind, but yet you can feel it in the heart. I had it; once when she told me she loved me, and once when the boy was born."

"I never spoke of love to her," went on Bill. "We were just good pals——"

"Bunk, bunk, bunk," growlingly interrupted the Scot. "You poor fool, you were trying to rob yourself of the only happiness you can or ever will know. Some kind friend should have given you a good clout in the jaw. I may do it myself yet."

"But let's change the subject, Monty. I wonder if they'll ever have that cursed train ready."

"Let's go out in the fresh air and do a bit of guard. I'd as soon sit on the breach of a field gun as this bench. Come on, Bill."

They swung out through the great entrance, and caught step. Twenty paces and then left about. Twenty paces, and then "To the rear, march!"

As they paced back and forth, Bill recalled a little incident of outpost duty.

At the conclusion of Bill's recital, Montgomery began an interminable account of a fight in which he had let the life's blood out of a quartette of bandits.

He had barely finished the first chapter of the yarn when they discovered that their train was made up.

"Better buy our tickets and get aboard," the G. A. suggested.

"I'm with you," agreed the Scot, regretfully attaching a "to be continued" to his yarn.

BILL Smith and his friend sat in the buffet car, the former smoking one cigar after another, the latter fairly eating cigarettes.

They had had breakfast and were seemingly contented. Montgomery had not threatened to conclude his story, and for that Bill was duly thankful. He liked the Scot, but his stories were too long-winded.

The train thundered through thriving towns surrounded by orange groves and apricot orchards, and then plunged abruptly into the desert.

"A sweet looking country this," sneered Montgomery.

" 'Tis all right where they have water," said Bill.

"Life is too short to consider such things," snarled Montgomery. "Let them that want to dig and wear their lives out on a farm, do it, but I pass."

The day was far gone when the G. A. leaped to his feet with a sudden exclamation of anger—anger against a certain forgetful individual by the name of Bill Smith. He had forgotten to mail the letters he had written to Hesperia and Courtney!

"What have I been thinking of? What have I been thinking of?" he almost shouted. "Courtney will turn the town upside down for me, and she——"

Montgomery was up ahead on a scouting trip. He was forever imagining that there might be some one on the train whom he knew.

Bill sought the observation platform and dropped down on a camp-chair. He was surprised to note the gathering dusk. A few passengers occupied chairs near him, but they were an unsociable lot, and he was permitted to brood uninterrupted.

He had told her that he would bid her good-by. If she thought anything of him—and he was convinced that she did—she would worry herself sick.

The pain in his heart was now almost unbearable. He was leaving her forever—and without a word.

Then Love brought up his reserves, and at last Bill Smith, G. A., realized that he was fighting a losing fight. What was his puny

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strength to be arrayed against the universe? Millions of men had bowed to the natural law. Could he hope to defy it? What was there about this man-imagined glory that could hope to vie with the great immutable forces of nature?

After weeks of travel and hardship, what would he see? A horde of barefooted brown men firing at another horde of barefooted brown men. There would be the same ridiculous uniforms of the countless "generals," and the same mass of ragged, filthy peons dying to satisfy the ambition of some one man. There would be dead men in yellow trenches, and millions of flies. The merciless tropic sun would quickly distort the bodies, and from the bloated shapes would arise the stench of a charnel-house.

And the other life—the sane life. A sweet woman in a white dress, with a rose on her bosom. A home where a man could lounge in comfort and security. He recalled Hesperia's friends, their prosperity and happiness. He thought of the smooth, winding roads shaded by great pepper trees. In vain he tried to forget a certain café where they had often dined, the lights, the music and the genuine happiness shining in the faces of men who were living sane, natural lives.

Yet the soldier in him died hard. Of course those chaps were comfortable and well fed, but were they real men? If put to the test, would they not show flabby and spineless cowardice? What would they do in blinding smoke and flame, with men lurching and falling all about them? Would they not bury their well-nourished bodies in the earth and squeal like trapped rabbits?

A white moon was rising over the desert's edge. It was under just such a moon that they had dreamed in that far-off Eden. He could see her face. That was the night when he had seized her hand and kissed the warm, soft palm, and pressed it to his face.

He resigned himself to thoughts of her, cleansing his mind of all other thoughts. Had it not been for the call of the service, they would have been married. He knew just how she would look after she had become his wife. There would be a certain adorable shyness about her. Then, humbly, he approached the ultimate. There would be a little Bill——

What times—what times they would have together! She would put a funny little dress on the kid, and they would go down to the beach and the youngster would play in the sand. He could see his grotesque efforts to stand erect, the sudden plumping down in the sand with the quaint abruptness of a cub bear.

And he would carry the kid around under his arm like a package, and friends of his would come along, and say:

"Hello, Bill. That your boy? Fine youngster."

And he, Bill Smith, would reply—

"Yes, he's a pretty fine young scamp."

Then when bedtime came— He wondered how he knew all about bedtime. Likely enough the kid would come to him, and crawl up in his arms, and nod and nod and nod. He would not let any one in the wide, wide world undress the youngster; that would be his job. And after the tiny garments had been removed from the sturdy little body, and the small pajamas donned, the boy would murmur, sleepily: " 'Night, daddy"; and he, Bill Smith, would carry his son to a very small bed.

Hesperia would not change through the years; she would always appear beautiful to him. Time would not be cruel with her; he would not permit Time to be cruel with her.

So lost was he in the ancient dream that he could feel her close presence, almost hear her sweetly drawling that common and very ordinary name, Bill Smith.

A rude brakeman awoke him from his golden dream. The train was slowing up. The brakeman was busy with some affairs all-important from a railroader's standpoint. At least he had succeeded in awakening Bill Smith.

The train came to a grinding halt. Bill looked down at the right of way, dully. Apparently it was solid earth; he had only to climb over the railing to be on that solid earth. The train would then go on; he could walk back. That unbearable pain in his heart would never cease; of that he was now quite sure. Of what use to a man was glory when the heart ached continually. What was glory? Dead men and flies.

HE COULD hear her calling across the desert wastes. She was calling, and the child of his dreams was calling, "Come home, come home." He made a last despairing effort to conjure up a desire to obey the call of the service, but it fell flat. He could hear only the voice of

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the woman he loved, hear only the mandate of the universe, "Those who disobey my law perish and are no more."

A train thundered by on its way to Angel City, and he became aware that the wheels beneath him were beginning to grind. A moment more and they would be under way.

Then, under the astonished eyes of the few passengers on the platform, Bill Smith swung over the railing and dropped down on the right of way. Slowly the train moved southward. Resolutely he turned his back on the twinkling, fading lights and made his way to the little desert station.

He pounded on the big door until a sleepy agent answered his summons with a growled—

"What's wanted?"

"When can I get a train to Angel City?"

"Seven-thirty in the morning," the agent informed him. "If you want to walk back to the station north of here, you can get a train out of there at two-fifty. It's only a six-mile walk."

"Can I get a team or a horse around here?"

"No," snapped the agent, and sneezed and returned to his bed.

Bill decided to walk back to the division point. As he plodded along, he had plenty to think about. He was not worrying about Montgomery. He would wire him and explain all. Monty would understand. From now on he would not bother his head about any one except Hesperia. He had recovered his reason. All his life he had been a fool. He must make up for lost time. He must hurry, hurry, hurry!

He quickened his pace. He was conscious of a warm glow of happiness and contentment. What a radiantly beautiful night it was!

Tired? Surely a man who fairly raced along was not tired. Once he lifted up his voice in song, recalling some vaudeville ditty.

> Back, back, I'm goin' way back;
> Back to the farm, b'gosh——

He was not conscious of fatigue. He only knew that some divine power was urging him on and back to his heart's desire. The world was a pleasant place. In it was no death, no sorrow, no tears, no partings. The lights of the distant town seemed like those of an enchanted city. They floated in the purple air like little golden argosies laden with happiness and hope.

Everything was beautiful, divinely so. He had never really lived until now.

As he boarded the train for Angel City he felt like shaking hands with the conductor; and did, much to that individual's surprise.

"Drunk," thought the conductor. He was partially correct; Bill was drunk—drunk with happiness.

The G. A. was frightfully disappointed in finding only one man in the smoking car who cared to talk. Upon him he pressed cigars. The man had a farm down in the Imperial Valley, and told him all about it. Bill countered with many startling yarns. He felt that the Imperial Valley farmer was one of the brightest, wittiest and most entertaining men he had ever met.

The train rolled into the Angel City station. Yes, he had been in that place ages ago; was there with a chap named Montgomery. Montgomery was in Central America now—revolution or some such thing. It was immaterial to him what Montgomery was doing; or what any one, except a certain girl, was doing.

Bill deserted the farmer with a brutal suddenness, and plunged toward a taxi. He would not wait. If she had not had breakfast, he would beg her to go back down-town with him. They would have breakfast together. Darn the appearances!

The taxi slowed down in front of the Waithe bungalow, and Bill hurriedly flung the driver a dollar. In his haste to reach the door he nearly knocked down a milkman.

It was Hesperia, arrayed in a morning gown, who answered his imperious summons.

He did not waste a lot of valuable time explaining matters. He simply gathered her in his arms. Before he kissed her he looked down into her eyes, and discovered with a pang that she had had little sleep, if any.

She drew him into the house, and he closed the door.

"I knew that you would come back to me, Bill Smith," she said in her sweet, drawling voice, now richly toned with tears; "and so—I waited."

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THIS magazine has always stood for adequate national defense. No plan for defense is adequate that does not include the training of a large proportion of American citizens—of the untrained, inefficient mob that has been called our "citizen soldiery." They are not citizen soldiery. They are merely sheep for the slaughter, and will remain so till taught how to take care of themselves—and our country.

How can we reach the boys of America and train them for defense, without stealing from their lives two or three of the best years of early manhood? Mr. Frederick Long, of the New York *Evening Globe*, has worked out a solution which has won not only the approval but the active and enthusiastic co-operation and practical support of regular Army authorities and the National Guard of all the States. Closely identified with the movement are men well known in welfare work among boys, for this National School Camp Association will not only teach boys how to be soldiers if they're ever called to that duty, but will also help develop them into men and citizens who will be valuable to their country in times of peace.

FOR the four years' course in military training, hygiene, sanitation, out-of-door craft and physical development, 1,000,000 boys and young men are wanted. Only spare time is required. During the school term a course of study will be followed that is now being laid out by the War College of the United States Government. National Guard authorities have granted the use of State armories for drill and training purposes. Every Summer the boys will be taken to regular camps for two months and given intensive training in soldiering by experienced officers—a total of eight months' field work in the four years.

An honorable discharge from this United States Army of Defense ought to prove the best kind of recommendation for a young man seeking employment. For it means that during four years, instead of spending his spare time on the street-corners or in worse places, he has been giving a major part of his attention and interest to health, cleanliness, the upbuilding of a strong body, discipline, self-control, learning to live and work with others and imbibing the essentials of real citizenship.

THE National School Camp Association has been chartered under the laws of the State of New York and has established headquarters at No. 1 Broadway, New York City. The incorporators of the association are Frederick L. Long, originator of the plan; Ernest K. Coulter, head of the Big Brother movement and for ten years clerk of the Children's Court of New York; Edward F. Brown, vice-president of the National child Welfare Association; William Hard; Dr. Charles W. Berry, sanitary supervisor of New York State and captain in the National Guard; Charles G. Bond, a New York lawyer, prominent in the campaign against the drug habit; Arthur S. Hoffman.

BY THE time this reaches your eye the matter will probably be before Congress for endorsement and support. Do what you can to help it along. Write to your Congressman. If some one raises the wail that it will "imbue our youth with the spirit of militarism," make him prove it. Call his bluff. Make him admit he's only theorizing and guessing. The *facts* will prove that such training works just the other way. You can get those facts from our State universities where drill is compulsory.

Later there may be a chance for you who can drill and have seen service to do some actual work, probably in your own town.

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APPLICATIONS for the American Legion have come in from all over the earth. Many of them have come to this magazine, for *Adventure* probably travels longer and farther afield than any other magazine. It is the magazine of the men with restless feet as well as of those of us who must abide at home, and where the restless-footed ones wander, it wanders with them. Offhand I can recall letters telling of its being in nearly all parts of the earth, from the equator both ways to the poles. It is sold at certain places, particularly in English-speaking countries, but for the most part it is carried by men and passed from hand to hand.

The following letter is from an American who is now a colonel in the Persian army. A copy of *Adventure* brought him the word that an American Legion had been formed. He needed only the word, and straightway wrote to enroll for his own country's service.

Kindly enroll my name as an American citizen subject to call in case of war. The following data may be of use to you.

Military experience: 2 years National Guard of Maine. 1 year in cadet corps University of Maine. 6 months (class 1906) at West Point. 2 years in U. S. Army in Engineers (Co. K, 3d Battalion, 3 months), rest of time in Troop E, 12th Cavalry, in the Philippines. Discharged as sergeant. A little over five years' service in the Philippines' constabulary. Resigned with rank of 1st lieutenant. Chief of Gendarmerie under Morgan W. Shuster, in Teheran, 1911-12, as colonel. Chief Army of Fars, November, 1913, to May, 1914, as colonel. At present colonel and instructor in Persian army at Teheran.

I speak Spanish and French fluently. Of the Philippine dialects I know enough Tagalog for all ordinary conversations. Slight conversational knowledge of Japanese, having studied the language.

Wife (Mabel D. Merrill), trained nurse. Hospital and U. S. Army experience of 9 years. She is willing to serve if called.

As to mechanical qualifications, I can and have run locomotives, gasoline and kerosene motorboats, can handle a telegraph key or a heliograph outfit. Can run any motor-cycle. My preference is for cavalry service, but my five years in the Philippines in the constabulary was with native infantry.

I wish every success to the Legion, and hope that you will arouse the country to a realization of its defenseless position as it is at present.—J. N. MERRILL, Colonel, Persian Army.

IT'S been some time since we've had a story from our old friend, S. B. H. Hurst, so his tale in this issue is doubly welcome. By way of introducing Mr. Hurst to those of you who haven't met him before, it may be stated in brief that he began to follow the sea when he was thirteen and before he settled down on land—he lives in Seattle—circled the earth some ten times, and touched at most of her ports.

"THEN I'm going to marry and settle down," says the adventurer. But does he? That's the theme of Robert V. Carr's story in this issue, and every last wandering-footed one of you will have a peculiar interest in that tale. Here is what the author himself has to say:

A man can not write anything without giving up a part of his own life. "The Stronger Call" is built on my own experiences, as well as what a host of world wanderers have told me.

ONCE, on a dirty night along the Pasig—I was on outpost, and it was raining by battalions—an Englishman, whose father was a Sir Something-or-other, told me how he hoped some day to settle down on the old place in England. He had wandered over the face of the earth, and enlisted in the American volunteers for fun, so he said. Little fun we had on that outpost. Rain, rain, and the Pasig lapping around our knees. The boys lay in a little, leaky nipa hut. I was supposed to be in command of the guard. What I was really concentrating on was a prayer for some one to come along with a drink of whisky to fight the fever in my bones.

The Englishman droned along with his story. He said he had been in India, Egypt and other far places. He never finished his story. Went on post, and other matters come up to take my attention, and I never talked with him again.

THEN there was an interpreter for Aguinaldo —chap by the name of Welsh, if I remember correctly. We used to meet at the house of Pedro, the tailor. Welsh had been in the British army in India and the Sudan. He was always mourning that he had never met the right woman. I lost track of Welsh after the Filipino fuss started. Pedro, the tailor, became a brown patriot, and got his leaden pass over the river. His wife stopped me on the Escolta and told me about Pedro. She said she was hungry. She was packing the brown baby that had played around our feet when Welsh told me his yarns. Staked her to a little money. She said that Pedro had been shot in the head, through the body, and the right knee. He was dead anyway.

THEN there was a regular army gamecock I met in Nagasaki. He told me that, as sure as Fate, he was going to find some good girl, buy a tobacco store or a saloon and settle down. But he didn't. He took on again, as soon as his money was gone.

COMES the ghost of a certain redhead who hobbles around minus his two good legs. I met that fellow in every conceivable place in the United States. One leg is off at the knee, the other is a mere stump, but still he beats his way around over the world.

"Say, listen to me, Bob," he told me in Helena, Mont. He had just returned from South Africa.

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"Listen to me. This kickin' around has near got my goat. Me for a nice little business and the right kind of a woman who will look after me and wipe the beer stains off my vest. No more driftin' in mine."

But where is the redhead now? Search me!

NOT long ago one of "them guys with a go-getem face" struck me in Los Angeles. We fell together like two thieves. He had just come up from Central America. He told me of ancient temples, placer diggings so rich that you could shovel up the dust, hidden treasure, and a few other enticing things. I let him get to me, and nearly promised to accompany him back to his Wonderland.

By main strength and awkwardness I managed to jar loose from him. He 'phoned me several times, but I avoided him like I would a scourge. He sure had me going. I hope I'll never lay eyes on the son of a gun again. He may land me next time. Yet he solemnly swore that, just as soon as he sized up a few things in the interior of about 2500 miles of jungle, he was going to get married and settle down. He had been married several times, but only brevet rank. He was a daisy, that boy, and would crawl right into your heart.

ALSO that pill I caught up with one Winter's night in Chicago. I was drinking a cup of beef tea by my lonesome in an all-night drug-store.

This terrier seats himself on a near-by stool, and leans an insolent eye up against me.

"Do you know," says he, and he was slightly jingled at that, "do you know I don't like the way you wear your hat. Why don't you wear it on your head instead of your ear? Anyway, what right have you to wear an umbrella for a hat?"

Those remarks concerning my Western lid annoyed me a little, and I told him that if he did not like the way I wore my hat it was up to him to fit it to my head.

"I'm a grand little hat-fitter," he informed me, confidentially.

"Get busy then," I told him.

I was a little sorry I had spoken so quickly, since, when he arose from his stool, he shot up to an alarming height. He was well made, too.

"This is no place to settle such an important matter," he said. "We might break up some of this tinware."

"You might come up to my room," I suggested. "We can move back the furniture."

"For that I see I am going to love you," he said. "Lead me to the place where you are to die."

I took him up to my room, pushed back the furniture, stripped off, and stood ready to be killed.

He looked me over for a time, and then grinned. "Aw, hell, let's go get a drink."

It took him the rest of the night to tell his story. A wanderer, and looking for excitement. He was then planning to go to China and join the Chinese reform army.

"But," he confessed, "when I meet the right woman, I will settle down."

But it takes a mighty clever woman to hold one of those boys, and I guess my hat-fitting friend never found one to his liking.

I AM thinking of a marine I knew in Manila He was from a little gunboat—the *Petrel*, I believe was her name. Perhaps my memory is faulty, but anyway the marine and I caught a counterfeiter—a native. That stunt gave us two weeks' liberty in Manila. By George, I've remembered that marine's name! West, that's it as sure as shooting. West and I had a great time together. That was before I got the fever, and I was feeling pretty good for a newly landed rookie.

West told me that, just as soon as he could get in shape, he was going to quit the service and settle down. But it was a joke. Even then he was spending his pay, throwing it right and left. We had a sack of dobe dollars, and rode in an open carriage.

I'll bet West is still a marine. If he isn't, he is the grand exception. I remember him jollying a Spanish señorita. He told that brunette daughter of joy that during the naval fight he had thought of her, and, for her sake, had pointed his gun straight up instead of at the Spaniards.

I HAVE met 'em by the score, and they all say the same thing. Few of them settle down. Bill Smith, G. A., did, but there will be times when he thinks of the past, and have to chew his pipe-stem and sit tight.

So there you have some of the reasons for the writing of "The Stronger Call."

So-long and good luck.—ROBERT V. CARR.

THE AMERICAN LEGION. If you are eligible and haven't enrolled and want to be of service to your country, write at once to the Secretary, American Legion, 10 Bridge St., New York. If you want to know more about it before you enroll, write to him or consult back issues of this magazine. And remember that it isn't only men with army, navy or militia training who are wanted, but railroad men, chauffeurs, doctors, engineers, cooks, mechanics, aviators, telegraphers, and men with experience in any one of some seventy other trades, businesses and professions.

A LETTER comes in from S. M. Blodget, of Brighton, Illinois, who very much wants to know the details of the campaign against the Piute Indians in southeastern Utah last Spring. As he says, it is likely to be the last Indian trouble of any account in this country, and many others will probably be equally interested in getting the facts.

One great advantage of our Camp-Fire is that we can generally get some inside information and the real facts in matters concerning which the general public gets only the general—and often doctored—account. If there are any of you who were members of the posse who went against the Piutes or are in a position to furnish the inside "dope," the rest of us will be glad to hear from you.

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REGISTER, REDHEADS

LAST month I told you of our plan to raise a regiment composed exclusively of red-headed men. At this writing there has not yet been time to hear from any of you. I had expected by this time to be able to give you some more information and to report some progress at this end of the line in the matter of organization and preparation. Instead, I have spent three weeks in a hospital—am still there as I write this. But I'll be out in a few days and will "get on the job" as soon thereafter as possible.

Meanwhile it's up to you if your hair is red. Don't get the idea there's any joke in this. The Red-Headed Regiment ought to be the best fighting regiment the world has ever seen.

Redheads who have seen service are eligible for the first line. Those who have not, will be used as reserves, to fill gaps in time of war. The regiment is to be complete in itself, ready to take the field at once. No matter what branch your service was, you're needed. Also, you're wanted if you have never sighted a gun. Send for an application-blank.

MOST of you remember that Captain W. Robert Foran, a member of the Camp-Fire, and contributor to *Adventure*, has been serving in the British Army at the front. I've received a card from him—one of those post-cards with a dozen or two statements printed on them. The soldier is not allowed to write anything on them except the date and his name—he merely crosses out the printed statements that are not true in his case. The printed statements left on Major Foran's card read as follows:

I am quite well. Have been admitted to hospital, wounded; am going on well, and hope to be discharged soon. I am down to base. Letter follows at first opportunity.

No letter has followed, though nearly a month has passed. We can only hope that all is well with him.

OUR identification cards remain free to any reader. The two names and addresses and a stamped envelope bring you one.

Each card bears this inscription, printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of ADVENTURE, New York, U. S. A., stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one friend, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. The names and addresses will be treated as confidential by us. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for purposes of business identification. Later, arrangements may perhaps be made for money deposits to cover cable or telegraph notifications. Cards furnished free of charge, *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application. Send no applications without the two names and two addresses in full.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Later, for the cost of manufacture, we may furnish, instead of the above cards, a card or tag, proof against heat, water and general wear and tear, for adventurers when actually in the jungle, desert, etc.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give the two names and addresses in full when applying.*

THIS that follows is a kick. Read it and form your own ideas before I kick back.

But lately, I have noticed a tendency among the authors to give the "bad man's rôle" to a Swede. I did not mind it once or twice, but it is repeated again and again. Therefore, I believe it is time to protest and I do—most strongly, because the Swedish history gives ample proofs that the Swedish nation, as a whole, is one of the foremost in heroic deeds, and most certainly second to none. The Swedish people are well known for their hospitality and open-hearted manners, but if fight it must be, the rule "fair play" goes without saying.

HAVING been a sailor for eleven years, traveling all over the seven seas, under different flags, and here in United States having tried my hand as a cowboy and woodsman, I believe I am fairly qualified when I say that the Swedes, or so-called "squareheads," measure up to the standard of a man fully as well as any American or English or any other nation on this planet.

Adventure authors, please take notice.

Now, Mr. Editor, if you would kindly arrange to publish this in the Camp-Fire it might do some good. Anyway, I hope so.—C No. 294.

Well, I didn't know we'd been doing anything to the Swedes until this letter came. I haven't anything against Swedes. In fact, I rather like them. They make good citizens.

Here's the answer:

(1) Many stories have to have a "bad man" or villain among their characters. Nobody disputes that.

(2) The villain has to be of *some* nationality. Two for half-breeds.

(3) *Which* nationality shall it be?

(Incidentally, the same question arises as to the creed or religion of the villain.)

WELL, if you make him a Swede, the Swedes kick. If you make him a German, the Germans kick. If a Frenchman, the French kick. If a Jew, the Jews

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kick. If a Catholic, the Catholics kick. If a Protestant, the Protestants kick. Oh, yes, they do.

Every little while I get a letter like the above, though this is the first from a Swede.

All right; how shall we fix it up?

If you left it to a Swede he'd probably make the villain a Russian. The English and Germans would vote for each other; the Italians and Austrians. And so on. And, whichever way you chose, one of each pair would be sore.

Well, Kickers, come across with the remedy.

You can't. But I can. It's dead easy. Make all villains Americans.

That's perfectly safe. For it is a remarkable fact that I have never known an American to kick because the villain in a story happened to be an American.

I DON'T mind violating all the magazine's rules and saying that this matter of the nationality and religion of the villain in a story is all utter damned nonsense.

We play no favorites in *Adventure*. All creeds and nationalities look alike to us. We take particular pains to avoid offense to any one of them, but this thing of being thin-skinned because your nationality or religion happens to be the same as that of a make-believe villain in a story— Nope, it's too foolish to talk about.

SOME time ago there arose at our Camp-Fire a discussion of "elephant graveyards"—whether there really are great deposits of ivory due to an elephant custom of going to an appointed place to die. The following from Gordon McCreagh, whose stories you have read in *Adventure*, sheds some light:

I see the letter in the Camp-Fire from Mr. W. T. White regarding elephants. Mr. White's theory is interesting, and opens up a new angle on the matter; but it hardly seems to me that it can be a true explanation of the mystery.

THAT animals rarely die a natural death is true; though I have myself on one occasion come upon a full-grown tiger floating peacefully down the Irawadi at Sinbo, just plain drowned. I sent out a canoe and had him towed ashore, and there was not a mark on him, nor had he been drowned long. A couple of timber men in camp there took the opportunity of getting me to photograph them in turn, standing with one foot on the fallen monarch in heroic style, à la Curzon. Of course, being the photographer myself, I missed this opportunity of establishing my reputation as a slayer of tigers.

Again, every jungle man will tell of having seen vultures sitting round in a ghoulish circle waiting for some beast to die. I've seen the thing myself, but have never attempted to investigate what the sickness might have been. I've been content with wasting a cartridge on the case.

BUT to come back to "hathi." The fact that the rumor of elehant graveyards is current among the natives of *all* elephant country, as widely separated as from Nepal to Siam, would surely indicate that the number of victims to hunters was immeasurably exceeded by the estimated number of elephants, even though not much reliance can ever be placed on native observation.

Now, as to man being the only natural enemy able to cope with the elephant, that is true only in comparatively recent years, that is to say, since the development of firearms. But it is inconceivable to think that savage man with bows and arrows, was able to account for all the elephants that have lived their allotted span of a hundred years throughout all the ages previous to the introduction of guns.

Take, as a specific instance, Ceylon. The people of that island were absolute savages so far as mechanical skill was concerned until the British came. That the immense herds of elephants there have been appreciably thinned down since their advent is surely proof that the great beasts were practically unmolested before—Well?

AGAIN, in very recent years, the Government of Burma reported that the poor success of the *khedda* operations was directly due to the small number of the herds captured—I mean the small number of elephants in each herd. Investigation showed that this was due to the great mortality among the beasts during the last few years through anthrax. It was figured that fifty per cent. of the animals had died off, since the herds averaged only about half as many as they used to only a few years previously—remember that elephants had been protected by law from sportsmen all this while.

It must be admitted in regard to this investigation that it was not carried out by trained scientists, but by Government officials, trained lawyers and army men. But even they must have displayed a reasonable proportion of intelligence, and their finding is worthy of some credence. Well? once more. Where did the anthrax cases go?—GORDON MCCREAGH, New York City.

LETTER FRIENDS

Note—This is a service for those of our readers who want some one to write to. For adventurers afield who want a stay-at-home "letter-bunkie," and for stay-at-homes, whether ex-adventurers or not, who wish to get into friendly touch with some one who is out "doing things." We publish names and addresses—the rest is up to you, and of course we assume no responsibility of any kind. Women not admitted.

(15) B. J. Kelley, 2d Battery (M. T. A. S. C.), attached S. W. B. Depot, England, Brecon, Wales.

(16) Harvey Morris, Co. M, 15 U. S. Inf., Tien-Tsin, China.

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BACK issues of *Adventure:*

1910, months 11, 12; 1911 (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9); 1912 (10); 1915 complete. $1 per doz. for lot; 15 c. each back of 1913, 10c. for others. Carriage extra.—Wm. Munday, Walkerville, Ont., Canada.

1910 (11, 12); 1911 (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); 1912 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10); 1914 (4).—Mrs. Benj. L. Lathrop, 935 Webster Ave., Scranton, Pa.

All issues from Aug., 1912, to date except 1914 (7, 8, 9).—Harry T. Black, 63 Waldemar Ave., Winthrop, Mass.

Mch., 1911, to date, complete.—Wm. A. Golden, 404 Diamond St., Pittsburgh, Pa.

1914 (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12); 1915 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9).—R. H. Stretch, 2657 37th Ave., S. W., Seattle, Wash.

All issues to date *except* 1911 (8); 1912 (5, 7, 9, 12); 1913 (8).—J. Jones, 297 Walnut St., Blue Island, Ill.

1913 and 1914 complete, $2. Carriage extra.—J. L. Fletcher, Richford, Vt.

1914 (6) glad to forward, prepaid, to any address.—Harold M. Haskell, 67 Appelton St., Manchester, N. H.

1911 (10); 1912 (8); 1913 (3). If any wish to purchase.—R. E. Van Arnam, 58 Rensselaer Ave., Cohoes, N. Y.

1911 (7 numbers); 1912, 1913, 1914 (all numbers); 1915 (10 numbers). In fair condition.—Theodore Silcott, Iron Bridge, Pa.

1912 (4, 5, 6, 9, 12); 1913, 1914 (all numbers); 1915 (to date).—Arthur W. Van Kleeck, 117 Gage St., Bennington, Vt.

1914 (from February to present date).—Arthur Trenholme, 333 E. 44th St., Portland, Ore.

HERE is a letter from W. Townend, who is at the front in France with the British hospital service. Of all our writers he is one of the most popular with you, and his letters at the Camp-Fire have created another bond between you. For several years he and I corresponded while he was wandering over the western part of the country, but it was only in the Fall of 1914 that I met him, when he spent some days with me on his way home to England. His eyes had previously caused his rejection from the army, and this time, too, they kept him from the firing-line, though he finally succeeded in entering the hospital service.

THE first part of his letter deals with Colonel Ap Rhys Pryce, the report of whose death was passed on to you at the Camp-Fire. Next Mr. Townend throws some interesting light on the Hector Macdonald mystery. Mr. Townend's letter was written some six months ago. I'm sorry that lack of space has made me hold it so long.

About Colonel Pryce. I have very good reasons to suppose that it was another Pryce who was killed. In fact I am certain that Pryce has not yet, or only just, reached the front. He was not in Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry when I met him in Winnipeg, but in the cavalry. I shall write to his father and find out where he is. But you must rest assured that he is not the man about whom Paul Hurst of Los Angeles wrote. In these days, though, any doubt about casualties is often set at rest by the appearance of the name in the official list, killed or wounded, weeks or months after the discussion cropped up. (And this is probably the most obscure paragraph I have ever written: and there I shall leave it, trusting to your ingenuity to discover my meaning.) I'll let you know when next I write where Pryce now is.

AS REGARDS General Sir Hector Macdonald, I shall do my best to find out what you ask. But I may not succeed, if for no other reason than that my time is so much taken up with drill, etc. All that I can tell you at present is that, so far as I know, there was not the slightest ill-will manifested against him by other officers owing to his being a ranker.

We have, of course, many officers who have worked their way up through the ranks, and at the present time more men are getting commissions through the ranks than by any other way. The Quartermaster-General, Sir William Robertson, perhaps the greatest organizer in any of the European armies, a great thinker and worker, was a trooper in one of the cavalry regiments and entirely through his own exertions worked his way up to one of the most prominent positions in the Army a man could have. I myself know of many men who have chosen to enlist in order to get a commission, rather than to enter the Royal Military College.

Of course, any man who in ordinary times can get a commission through the ranks is a picked man. It is by no means easy, naturally. Strangely enough the men themselves, that is to say, the rank and file, look with suspicion on the officer who has served as one of themselves. They are critical and disposed to resent his being set over them unless they are very sure that he is a man of education or distinction in some way or other, military or sporting, and a strong man. I don't know if I have made this clear or not. It is difficult to explain, really, but Tommy Atkins is rather a queer bird, and he likes to be officered by men who are different from himself. Anyhow, this has nothing to do with Hector Macdonald.

"FIGHTING MAC," as he was known in the Army, became General in Command of the Highland Brigade after the disastrous battle of Magersfontein in the Boer War. (And—ye gods!—we don't consider anything a disaster nowadays unless the dead are numbered by thousands.) He was extremely popular, and a real fighting man. He won his spurs under Kitchener in the Sudan, and had a big reputation. After the Boer War he was in command in Ceylon, and it was there that the scandal which led to his coming home broke out.

According to the current rumor at the time, he came to England to consult with Lord Roberts as to what was his best course. Should he face the charges or not? I do not know what happened. Some say that Roberts told him to go back and fight. He started and got no farther than Paris, where he is supposed to have shot himself. This is as much as any one really knows for certain. This is what we were all led to understand. If this is true, much that is at present a mystery could be explained.

He was married, but was not living with his wife. This, I think, is certain. He left a son aged perhaps fourteen or so who was at school at Dulwich, one of the big English public schools, where I myself had been some few years earlier. (This was in 1902: I had left a short time, but I do not suppose that I was actually at school with young Macdonald, although I might have been without knowing

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it. The date was 1903, by the way, not 1902.) I shall write to a colonel I know in the War Office and sound him tactfully about the matter. As regards being dismissed the service when found guilty of the charges brought, I do not believe that any charges *were* brought. This I shall also endeavor to find out.

INFORMATION DIRECTORY

IMPORTANT: Only items like those below can be printed—standing sources of information. No room on this page to ask or answer specific questions. Recommend no source of information you are not *sure* of. False information may cause serious loss, even loss of life. *Adventure* does its best to make this directory reliable, but assumes no responsibility therefor.

For data on the Amazon country write Algot Lange, care U. S. Consul, Para, Brazil. Replies only if stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed and only at Mr. Lange's discretion, this service being purely voluntary. (Five cents postage in this case.)

For the Banks fisheries, Frederick William Wallace, editor *Canadian Fisherman*, 35 St. Alexander St., Montreal. Same conditions as above.

For the Philippines and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii and Alaska, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agri., Com., and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

For Central and South America, John Barrett, Dir. Gen., Pan-American Union, Wash., D. C.

For R. N. W. M. P., Comptroller Royal North West Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can., or Commissioner, R. N. W. M. P., Regina, Sask. Only unmarried British subjects, age 22 to 30, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs., accepted.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal, Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

For Adventurers' Club, get data from this magazine.

For The American Legion, The Secretary, The American Legion, 10 Bridge St., New York.

Mail Address and Forwarding.—This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

For cabin-boat and small boat travel on the Mississippi and its tributaries, "The Cabin-Boat Primer," by Raymond S. Spears; A. R. Harding, Publisher, Columbus, O., 60 cents.

National School Camp Ass'n; address its Sec'y, 1 Broadway, New York.

Red-Headed Regiment, address this magazine.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN.

WANTED —MEN

NOTE.—We offer this corner of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to our readers. Naturally we can not vouch for any of the letters, the writers thereof, or any of the claims set forth therein, beyond the fact that we receive and publish these letters in good faith. We reserve the privilege of not publishing any letters or parts of a letter. Any inquiry for men sent to this magazine will be considered as intended for publication, at our discretion, in this department, with all names and addresses given therein printed in full, unless such inquiry contains contrary instructions. In the latter case we reserve the right to substitute for real names any numbers or other names. We are ready to forward mail through this office, but assume no responsibility therefor. **N.B.—Items asking for money rather than men will not be published.**

PARTNER to travel about U. S. till we get a stake, then try and locate silver prospect I have in view in California. Have no use for any one who drinks. Only men who mean business need apply. State your qualifications. I am a draftsman, designer, builder and miner. An American, 34. At present without funds, and a lover of the outdoors.—Address W 299.

Inquiries for opportunities instead of men are NOT printed in this department.

PARTNER, 20 to 25, for hunting and trapping in Wyoming or Oregon. One who can rough it, and who would be willing to homestead if opportunity offered. Must furnish half the outfit.—Address ALFRED KLUG, Kansas City Country Club, Kansas City, Mo.

POSSESSOR of map and key of Cocos Is. treasure, desires partner. Rare chance. Write, or call after 7 P. M.—JAMES PERRY, 70 Cranberry St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

PARTNER to travel anywhere, preferably S. America, for pleasure and adventure. I'm a university graduate, and have traveled quite some.—Address W 301.

YOUNG married couple to accompany wife and myself on a trip in our new 7-passenger Packard car, New York to 'Frisco. Must be prepared to stand share of expense.—Address ASHLEY E. GREEN, 427 School St., Lakewood, N. J.

PARTNER. Some one with intentions of going to Alaska to trap and hunt. Would be willing to go anywhere for adventure and gain. 21 yrs., and of good character.—Address W 300.

Inquiries for opportunities instead of men are NOT printed in this department.

PARTNER, 18 to 20, to take trip into Canada for trapping. Must furnish his share of expense.—Address MILES E. MYERS, Long Pine, Nebr.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE.—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right, in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada.

WALTON, JACK, Jacksonville, Fla. Last heard of Paducah, Ky., last of June. 17 yrs., 5 ft. 5 in., 120 lbs.—Address CARL C. CORLEY, Gen. Del., Paducah, Ky, or. HAROLD WALTON, Gen. Del., Louisville, Ky.

ASH, CAPT. GEORGE, American. Led charge of 85 men against 400 Mexicans, April 8, 1913. I was under his command in that battle. Later went to Mexico City as spy for Gen. Villa. Last heard of in Missoula, Mont., lecturing on vaudeville stage.—Address A. W. WATSON, Gen. Del., Butte, Mont.

PEARSON, WALTER, brother, left Springfield about 6 yrs. ago for the West. Last heard of in Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, about 4 yrs. ago. Resided once at Cardiff near Edmonton. Presumed to have gone farther west. 38 yrs., 5 ft. 6 in., fair complexion.—Address G. C. PEARSON, Springhill P. O., Cumberland Co., Nova Scotia. Canadian papers, please copy.

STANDBAUGH, LESTER, last seen in Taft, Calif., 1913. Have important news.—Address CLAUDE M. SLATER, Box 666, Coalinga, Calif.

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STEVENS, CLAUDE (Tex), and Marlock, Dan (Shorty), who were in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., last year. Write or wire me. Can use both of you.—Address "Doc," Okeechobee, Fla.

ANDERSON, WILLIAM, or "Bill," from Ft. Wayne, Ind. Write to old pal who traversed Arkansas and Oklahoma with you in 1908 in the "picture game." Also working in saw-mills.—Address R. W. POPE, 1011 N. 16th St., Birmingham, Ala.

Inquiries will be printed three times. In the January and July issues all unfound back names will be printed again.

STEPHENS, WILL, last heard from in Ottawa, Ont., Can. Polly, where is Fred Escott, last heard from in Witwatusrand Deep? If either of you see this, give address of the other and address—S. J. PROUT, Wakefield, Gogebic Co., Mich. Canadian papers, please copy.

KING, FRANK M., half-brother. Left Paris, Texas, Sept. 7th to go to Ft. Worth. Automobile mechanic and driver. 5 ft. 6 in., 140 lbs., light brown eyes; blind in right eye; fluent talker; speaks Spanish well.—Address HOMER F. SHIVERS, 701 S. F. St., Hugo, Okla.

WATSON, LOUIS, left Black Mountain, N. C., about Jan. 1, 1915, to join his brother in Honolulu, Hawaii. Never arrived.—Address BARNDIE A. WATSON, Gen. Del., Honolulu, Hawaii.

BISHOP, ANGUS (Jack), my son. High diver. Last heard of with Rice and Dore's water carnival. Your mother needs you badly.—Address MRS. KATHERINE BISHOP, care MRS. ALEXANDER JOHNSTONE, 371 Edgecombe Ave., New York City.

SEMPLE, JAMES T., of Philadelphia. Last heard of in Klondike. Formerly with U. S. Army. His brother would like to hear from him.—Address ELLSWORTH J. SEMPLE, 5985 Garfield Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

BUTTS, or Olstrom, Godfrey, my half-brother. Left home 1899 for Idaho. Later went to England. Also fought in Boer War.—Address GEORGE W. BUTTS, Enterprise, Kansas.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

MCKEEVER, JOHN A. Last heard of from Hermann, Mo., 1911. Formerly employed at Washington Navy Yard. Brown hair, blue eyes, 23 yrs.—Address MRS. A. MCKEEVER, 109 2d St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

FISHER, JOSEPH, last heard of Great Falls, Mont. Left Iroquois, Ont., Can., about 1889. 45 yrs., 200 lbs., 5 ft. 8 in.—Address W. J. FISHER, Winchester Springs, Ont., Can.

J. P. C., communicate with your wife LEAH, Gen. Del., San Diego, Cal.

COSTELLOE, Jack and Ryan, William Ryan, Australians who hiked with Ed Bushby (Cockney) through Ecuador and Colombia. Last heard of in Cartagena.—Address L. T. 113.

BISHOP, CHARLES, my son. Believed to have been at San Francisco Fair. Native of California. Member Sigma Nu Fraternity. Write your mother.—Address MRS. KATHERINE BISHOP, care MRS. ALEXANDER JOHNSTONE, 371 Edgecombe Ave., New York City.

Inquiries will be printed three times. In the January and July issues all unfound back names will be printed again.

DIAMOND S. Please send *Adventure* your address. We have important information, of value to you.

LAMBERT, H. L., formerly an entry clerk with A. T. Stewart & Co. Supposed to have been drowned at Coney Island, Aug., 1876. Later seen in Middle West. Rumored to have been successful in business in St. Louis. N. Y. *Herald* of Feb. 21, 1915, published item that H. G. Lambert had left former friend, John T. Robinson, by will, about $20,000. Any information wanted.—Address WILLIAM B. ROBINSON, 544 E. 136th St., Bronx, New York City.

NUMBERS 56, 68, 73, 76, W 93, W 167, W 140, W 150, W 153, W 183, W 184, W 189, W 195, W 203, W 211, W 212, W 215, W 231, W 250, C 189, C 205, L. T. 207. Please send us your present addresses. Letters forwarded to you at addresses given us do not reach you.—Address A. S. HOFFMAN, care *Adventure*.

MANUSCRIPTS sent us by the following are being held by us, having been returned to us as unclaimed at the addresses furnished:

W. Lynch, Trenton, N. J.; Henry W. Edwards, New York; W. G. Gormley, Ontario, Canada; George Stillons, Chicago, Ill.; Francis Manston, Chicago, Cal.; James Perry, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Edward Weston, Rochester, N. Y.; R. Spanjardt, Montreal, Que., Can.; Robert G. Patterson, Atlanta, Ga.; D. Kelly, Toronto, Can.

THE following have been inquired for in "Lost Trails." They can get name of inquirer from this magazine:

A—C. ABERNATHY, Sumner; Adams, Eddie, sign-writer; Adams, Will Holden, Vicksburg, Miss.; Aldridge, Harry C., Singer Mfg. Co., San Francisco; Allen, Robert, Hamilton City, Cal.; Allen, Martin Danon; Alston, William E.; Alva, Stockwell; Arhens, Henel Breckenridge; Armbruster, Joseph Anthony; Arrington, Tommy; Asher, Orlie; Bagley, Thomas H.; Baker, Edward E., 4th Inf., Co. A; Baker, Mrs. Maude, left Dallas 1900; Barber, Wallie, Cuba 1907-8; Barnes, Wm. Henry; Barrette, Miss Cora Mabel; Beaton, A. W., Quincy, Ill.; Beaver, Fred; Bedell, Percy John; Bee, Taver, Mexico 1901-2; Behrend, Otto F.; Belt, Dr. H. P., Philippines; Bennet, Richard P., Mt. Clemens, Mich.; Bennet, Ross; Bens, Joseph ("Jupp"); Benson, Harry, Mansfield Center, Conn.; Bergholen, Fred; Best, F. P. ("Kid Freddie Best" or "Slats"); Black, Beb, *alias* "Big Ben," cattleman; Black, Lamar, Bremerton, Wash.; Black, Leslie, Huntley, Mont.; Blackham, N. A.; Blankman, Charles H., D. L. & W. machine shops, Buffalo, N. Y.; Bleckler, Thomas, Red Mills, Cal.; Boatswain's Mate, Holyoke, Seymour Relief Expedition; Bolton, Leonard, Tacoma, Wash.; Bossard, Raymond C.; Bowhan, W. H., Colo. Nat. Guard 1913-14; Bozan, R. W., *alias* R. W. Pearson; Brackney, surname, to establish connections; Bradford, Frank Wm., N. Yakima, Wash.; Bradley, Alonzo, Wellsville, Mo.; Brantley, John Wm.; Breed, Riley H., Spokane, Wash.; Brice, M. E.; Brink, Clifford; Brooks, Al. H., rancher, Can.; Brown, Arthur, Lewistown, Mont.; Brown, Ed. G., "The Dalles Country," Ore.; Brown, Fred A. and Mary; Brown, James; Brown, my traveling mate from Portland to Weed, 1912; Brue, Charlie (White), Milner, Idaho; Brush, Don, supposedly in U. S. Navy; Buckner (Blume), Henry Ansil, adopted son of W. Blume, Worden, Ill.; Burhans, Burton L.; Burke, Edgar, Hamburg, 1912-13, working for the H. A. P. A. G.; Burns, Wm., tailor of Dubuque; Burns, Wm., Eldorado 1904-06; Butcher, Bob, Kansas City, Mo.; Butterbaugh, Christian M.; Byrd, L. B., west coast of Mexico 1908-09; Canavan, David; Campbell, Joseph N.; Carr, David H.; Carrico, Ralph; Carl, B. S.; Case, John; Child, George, vanished in Australia 1882; Christensen, A. G., South America; Coates, John F., inventor of smoke-consumer; Cockrill, Arthur R.; Colburn, Johnny, with V. S. R. S. surveyors, Somerton, Ariz., 1912; Cole, Egbert L.; Comfort, James, Lepanto, Ark.; Comstock, Orns H.; Connelly, Jim, Kongo district, Africa, doing patrol duty 1888-9; Cooke, Albert, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1907; Cook, Elliot, *alias* George Coburn; Cook, Wm., private in 3rd Squadron 14th Cav., Jolo, 1903-04; Cooper, J. Howard; Costelloe, Jack; Cotler, Wm. T., *Lake Fisher*, 1890; Courish, Andrew, Dona Ana, N. M., 1898; Cox, John Arthur, Jacksonville, Fla.; Craft, James M., *alias* Taylor, Oklahoma City, 1906-07; Crane, Roland Henry; Cravens, James S., Springfield, Mo.; Cravens, Reecie B. and Tollie T., Prices Branch, Mo.; Crawford, John and Lee; Crockett, Louis Henry, Boston, 1910; Crompton, James; Cronkhite, N. I. W.; Crosby, Si; Cross, James Kenneth, broker's office, New York 1909; Cross, Frederick, Montreal, Can.; Culp, Simon P.; Culver, Billy, Birmingham, Ala., 1910; Cunningham, Patrick, Michael and James.

D—I. DABYMPLE, CHARLES S.; Daley, Walter, Tampico, Mexico, 1912; Dalziel, James, bark *Socotra;* Darst, Red ("Memphis Red" or "Redshear"); Davenport, James, New Orleans, La., March, 1912; Davenport, Phil; Davenport, Wm. L., Dexter, Texas; Davidman, Max; Davis, James P., Harper, Kansas, 1901; Davis, Warren; Davies, "Guy"; Davis, E. L., formerly of Winnipeg; Deckard, Ed (Wessel); Dennics, Lee A., Oklahoma, 1906; Deny Borthers; Dies, Arthur W., Des Moines, Ia., June, 1911; Digel, Julius C. ("Jack"), Cosby, N. D., Nov. 10, 1912; Drennan, John Matthew, Mexia, Texas; Dobbert, Ed., "Kid," San Pedro and Los Angeles, 1907 or 1908; Dorrity or Dougherty, John, once employed Central Post-Office, Philadelphia; Douglas, Foster W., "Dong;" Down, Stephen; Dowst, Arthur A., Seattle or Tacoma, Wash., Sept., 1911; Du Guay, Wm., Troop L, 11th Cav., U. S. A., Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala., 1912; Duncan, George Riley, Kremlin, Okla., 1895; Dunn, James, & Co., Tia Jauina, Mexico; Dwight, L. H., Hospital Corps, Philippines, 1900; Eckles, Warren, worked for Psome Co., New York City; Ellingsen, Frithjof, Aberdeen, Wash., May 13, 1911; Ellis, Harry; Elmsie, Donald E.; Ensign, W. H.;

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Engesser, Conrad A.; Ewell, Leighton; Fairfax, Donald C., Rio de Janeiro; Farnsley, A. A.; Fedoroski, Karol; Felker, Walter A., Co. A, 21st U. S. Inf., Phila., 1904-06; Fields, Harry R.; Flores, Jose Timoleon; Floyd, Kerry, 'Frisco, 1893, en route to Sydney, Australia; Foley Mike L., Hugo, Okla., June 21, 1914; Foster, John Frank; Foy, George Havelock Willing; Frank, E. S.; Francis, Henry, *Trenton*, Samoa; Frager, Clifford, Foraker, Okla.; Franklin, Wm. W., Hamilton, Nev., 1883; Fuller, S. J.; Fullmer, Frank F., Moose Jaw, Sask., Can.; Gallaway, Karl H.; Galloway, James R.; Gallup, Cordia, *alias* Leon Burt; Gaylord, C. W.; Gazzale, Andrew Mellers; Gebbs, or Gibbs, Rebel junta courier, Santa Rosalia; Gillbertson, Joseph, Brisbane, Queensland, Sept. 30, 1899; Gillespie, Joe W.; Gillespie, Gene, "Manhattan;" Gogg, Ikey; Goldstein, S. A., Syracuse, N. Y.; Goodwin, James Alexander, 36th U. S. V.; Gordon, John, enlisted Navy 1889 or 1890; Gottlieb, Edward; Grace, E. Leslie, Queens Own Scottish Borderers, Hospital Corps; Grace, Mike, Rocky Mts., 1900; Graham, Charles A., Toronto, Aug., 1913; Graham, Dan, S. S. *Harold B. Nye*; Graves, "Jim," G Battery, 3rd U. S. Heavy Artillery; Greenwood, Charles; Growman, Harry; Gulliver, Iquique, 1898; H. G. G.; Hall, Charles T.; Hamilton, Charles; Hamilton, Thomas K., Braintree, Mass.; Hamm, Robert E., Halletsville, Tex., 1899; Hammerschmidt, Raimund; Hammond, Paul C., Cheyenne, Wyo., Nov. 21, 1913; Hardy, John; Harolow, Robert Pinkney; Harris, Joe, Webster, N. D., 1909; Harson, Wm.; Hart, Jack, once of U. S. Cav.; Haskinson, Gordon; Hayes, "Bob"; Hayman, Charles Fisher; Heckenhauer, Karl H.; Hellman, H. H.; Hess, Erskine ("Erk"); Hiatt, Claud, brother of; Hill, John Warren; Hinckley, Roy and Harry; Hinds, John Hamilton; Hiyden, Charles; Hoeker, Louis; Hoffman, S. G., cook; Hoffman, Clint, stowaway, *Closeburn;* Holbrook, Dis (civil engineer); Holbrook, Elmer H.; Holden, Willis A.; Holgate, Clem (Sunny); Hollis, Bach; Hoover, Ferris E., Downers Grove, Ill.; Howlette, H. J. ("Pete"), pal and bunkie, M Troop, 4th U. S. Cav.; Hudson, Charley, Monroe, Wash.; Huffman, J. L.; Huggart, George N., Peoria, Ill.; Hughes, Henry; Hull, Harry H., Vancouver, B. C.; Hutchison, George; Ingersoll, Harry G.; Ingram, Robert W.; Irvin, Howard on *Maitai*, '11; Irving, James D., Private Co. A, 18th Inf., Ft. Clark, Tex., 1899; Irwin, E. T., jockey.

J—L. JACKSON, Clifford P., Havana, Cuba; Jasper, Key West, Mexico; Jay, Wilburn, Madero Foreign Legion; Jefferson, Carl (Jeff); Jenkins, Earl, Toronto, Can.; Jenkins, Thomas Clayton, Aberystwyth, Wales; Jennings, Ben; Jewell, George H.; Jessup, Theodore V.; Johnson, A. E., Redstone, Mont.; Johnson, Charles H., prospector; Jones, Wilson, M. or his children, Arsenal St., St. Louis; Jones, Wm. H. (Bill Jones); Juan; Juno, A. E.; Kane, Barney, Chicago, May 29, 1913; Kanthar, Paul M. T.; Kaplan, Paul; Kellar, Wm. S., Tampa, Fla.; Kelley, Dewey, Sam, French Gulch, Mont.; Kemp, driver in Oakland; Kennedy, George P.; Kern, Max, Cuba, 1907-08; Kernochan, Frank, Greenwood, B. C.; Keys, Levy, Farmers Sta., Highland Co., Ohio, 1859; Kinzman, Martin; Klemann, Robert; Knight, Charles L., Cuba, 1907-08; Knight, Charles, Spokane, Wash.; Knudsen, Fred, *Red Rock, Balmoral;* Koynors, C. H. (Spud); Kretz, Willie; Lane, Martin, U. S. A., Klondike; Lantz, Samuel Joseph; Lassen, Capt. Lorenz; Lavell, Prof. Cecil F.; Lawler, Slim; Law, Gordon; Leach, O. L. (Slim); Lear, John, Everett, Wash.; Lee, John R., Amsterdam, N. Y., 1912; Leigh, T. G.; Leslie, Blayney; Levy, Samuel; Le Vonde, Wm.; Lewers, Nate; Lewis, Harrison H., Jr.; Lighthowler, George W.; Lindsay, Charles, Sgt. 10th Inf., Tucuran, P. I., 1902-04; Litchfield, H.; Lloyd, Edmund; Box, John and George; Lockard, Harry; Long, Harry; Lovett, Charles, seaman; Lyons, Wm. C.

M—N. McAULIFFE, George with V. S. R. S. surveyors, Somerton, Ariz., 1912; McArthur, Wm., piper in 42nd Black Watch Highlanders; McBride, Douglas ("Andy Douglas"), Detroit; McCandless, Alexander, and descendants; McCarthy, Dan, rigger on Victoria Falls Bridge, Nyanza; McClellan, Wm., Kimberley, South Africa; McClintock, Harry K.; McCormack, 1912-13 on construction work in Mexico, Necaxa district on Laxaxalpam tunnels; McDaniels, Taylor, druggist, fought Idaho forest fires, 1910; McElvain, Wm.; McFall, Joseph (Bob Lee), Waverly Ranch, Fresno, Cal., 1904; McGonigal, Ed., U. S. S. *Lancaster;* McIntyre, J. J., Brandon, Man.; McIntosh, James W., harness-maker; McKeever, Arthur, wrestler; McKenney, Hugh, Wenatchee, Wash., Oct., 1913; McKinley, Harry, 2nd U. S. Inf.; McKinzie, J. W., formerly U. S. N.; McLay, Charles; MacDonald, John Ava; Macdonald, R., British Hussars, U. S. Cav.; MacNeill, Jack V. ("Robbie"), artist; Mackie, Ed.; Macpherson, J. W.; Maddux, John F.; Maples, Clem M.; Markle (Va.), surname, establish connections; Marsh, Memer (Lee or de Chantles), or any relative or friend, native of Poughkeepsie; Margolin, Louis; Martel, Dick, Hermosillo; Mauzey, Jack; Maxwell, Wm.; Mason, Wm. J.; Matthews, Will Fred, boxer; Maynell, Charles; Mazurette, Alfred P.; Meade, Dan; Meek, Harold C.; Megie, Benjamin F., S. America, or S. Africa; Meisel, John; Meissner, Pete, Grajervo; Mendoza, Richards, Argentine Consul at Ottawa; Mentusha, Big; Merle, Eugene; Meyrick, Lieut. Archibald, Prince of Wales' Light Horse, Boer War; Miller, Frank; Miller, Henry Chapin, Warrenburg, Mo., 1874; Miller, Jacob; Miller, T. H., Canadian; Miller, R. H., Toro Pt., C. Z., 1913; Miller, Wm., electrician; Milligan, Archie, Philippines; Moleres, Edward; Monroe, Joe R.; Moreland, John L.; Morgan, Earl; Morgan, Wm. Hare, Boulder, Wyo.; Moriarty, John F., Madero Foreign Legion; Morine, Capt. C. D.; Morissey, Warren (or Morrissey); Morris, Thomas George Dixon; Morrisey, John; Morrow, Joseph; Moulder, Joe; Moyer, Ted; Mudd, Clarence; Mullen, H. E. (Mac), Peoria, Ill.; Mullen, Thomas, Buffalo, N. Y.; Murray, Michale, late of Tralee, Ireland; Nelson, Fred; Nichols, Samuel R.; Nicholson, Harry A. (or Nickerson); Niell, H. (Nielson); Nolan, Jack; Nolan, Michael, born in Kilkenny; Nugent, Richard Thomas; Nylander, C. W.

O—R. O'BRIEN, Wm. F., carriage-maker; O'Callaghan, Dennis Charles; O'Flaherty, Joseph H.; O'Neal, Frank, Depot Harbor, Ont., 1900-01; Ogden ("Tex." or "Two Bar Slim"); Olsen, Abbey; Orpen, Wm. M.; Owen, Robert; Owen, Allan H.; Paige, Frederick; Parker, O. B., formerly of Mexico; Parker, Ross, medical student, Mich., 1905-07; Parker, Capt. P. T.; Parker, Jess, cowpuncher; Patterson, Robert J. of Cleveland, O.; Pavilla, Jack of "Jackly Wonders"; Pedder, Richard; Penault, Frank; Penney, J. C.; Pennock, Dr. Walker C.; Peralto, José L.; Perry, Mark M.; Perry, Thomas Balantyne (Balatine); Pettinger, Eugene; Pettit, James R.; Phillips, J. R. ("Red," "Jasper" or "Perique"); Phillpot, Shirley M., ex-Sgt., U. S. A.; Piper, E. E., Gearhart, Ore., 1914; Pittenger, Fred; Pogoda, Albert; Pohl, Bernard H.; Polter, Caloin B.; Pope, Billy; Portwood, Alf., blacksmith; Prince, Ben, Memphis, Tenn.; Raansvaal, Isaac, Co. I, 9th U. S. I.; Rae, Clarence, P. J. R.; Raeder, Edward J.; Radcliffe, Col. John (Jack) Stanley; Ray, Carol D.; Reardon, John Patrick; Redpath, Adam; Reeves, Paul V., Manila, P. I., 1900; Reitmeier, Charley; Remes, Alexander or "Allie"; Reynolds, Wm., Sgt., Tucuran, 1902-04, Co. F, 23rd Inf.; Reynolds, Wm. P., Chicago, 1908; Rhode, Gust; Rice, Andrew, 49'er, Bath Co., Ky.; Rice, Mark (Serrott); Rice, Charles B., Kansas City, Mo.; Richard, Charlie E., Cardiff, Wales; Richardson, Frank Eply; Richard, Mrs. Lauretta; Rimer, J. D., 4th Mo. Vol. 1898; Rivers, Major Don. C. A.; Roach, Henry; Roberts, Joe, Chicago, Ill.; Robertson, Charlie, mulatto; Robertson, Harry G., Customs, Manila; Robertson, Wyndham; Rogers, Henry, Memphis, Tenn., 1915; Rogers, Peter, of Manchester; Rogerson, Wm. L.; Rose, Jack ("Lone Eagle"); Rowe, Glen S., wireless on yacht *Sialia;* Russell, Charles B., Hospital Corps; Ryan, Charles, Meacham, Ore.; Ryan, Billy; Ryerson, Daniel Sherman, Arizona.

S—Z. SABIN, Carl and Steele, Clayton, late of U. S. N.; Sarries, James H.; Sawyer, Walter; Scates, James A., Engineer Corps, 1901-04; Scheidell, John; Schener, Nick; Scisco, Leon D.; Scott, F. B., California, 1912; Scott, Fred, once Pa. newspaper man; Scott, Johnson, W., track foreman, K. C. S. Ry., Noble, La.; Scott, Norwood, Lansdowne, Pa.; Scully, John J., bricklayer; Seery, surname, establish connections; Seigel, "Dutch"; Servin, Martin; Shannon, James and Wm.; Shea, Timothy; Shea, W. A., hotel porter, Cement near 'Frisco; Sheehan, James; Shepherd, Richard L., Vancouver and Toronto; Sherard, W. C., west coast of Mexico (1908-09); Sherwood, Dote (Golden); Sherwood, F. A.; Smith, F. E., *Olympia* at Manila; Shinn, J. W. or G. W.; Shumaker, Robert F.; Smith, R. I., Grand Junction, Colo., 1908; Snodgrass, R. L. ("Lee"); Sipes, Hubert E.; Smith, Francis Basil, 17 Troop, S. African Constabulary; Smith, Oscar, Australian; Smith, Wm. Mck., Portland, Ore., 1914; Smith, Wm. Chalmers, Mexico; Snider, M. E., Corpus Christi, Tex.; Snowberger, Kirk R.; Snyder, Bill, Wellesley Hills, Mass.; Sorentzen, Paul, *alias* Sam, Wilson; Spang, Chester; Spiering, August Frederick Wm.; St. Clair, Fred; Staley, Frank N.; Stearns, Herman; Stevens, Mrs. J. S.; Stewart, E. B.; Stewart, W. J. (Bill); Stockton, Walter, 26th U. S. Vol. Inf., 1899-01; Stout, E.; Stokes, P. A., Honolulu, Hilo, 1911; Strong, S. O., Bisbee, Ariz., 1907; "Struthers"; Sullivan, Frank; Sutherland, Charlie, once Bechuanaland Police; Sutton, Edward Hepper, steel merchant; Sweidert, "Dutchy" (phonetic spelling); Sykes, Grover C.; Taylor, H. E. (Hal); Taylor, James C. and wife, Margaret Dillon Taylor; Theisen, Peter Frank; Thomson, Roscoe; Thomson, Corp. John, 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, Boer War; Thurber, E. T. (Tom); Tice, Wm. G.; Timmanis, Frank E.; Tombs, Albert, 2nd U. S. Inf.; Treasdale, A. (Weasel); Trauhauf, Harold A.; Travis, Joe; Treat, Roy M.; Troughton, J. J.; Turner, Charles N., Monterey, Mexico; Turnnard, Frank Albert; Underwood, I. T., Columbus, O.; Van Auker, Caesar; Van Wagoner, "Dutch"; Vanderdasson, Jim; Wagner, Rudolph (Ruddy); Walker, Charles T.; Wallenstein, Wm. J.; Walters, George (Greasy); Washburn, Bert; Weaver, Joseph C.; Weiner, Oscar; Wetter, Pierce and Telfair; Whalley, Thomas; Whelan, Frank, Calif., 1913; Wiley, Elsworth; Wiley, Miles G.; Will, John Andrew; Williams, Babe; Williams, C. E., Colon, Panama; Williams,

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Elizabeth Matilda; Williams, Jack, Tien-Tsin, China; Wilson, Col. Robert B.; Wilson, Charles Livingston; Wilson, Sadie, Duluth, Minn., 1910; Willbern, Walter P.; Willis, A. Holden; Wings, Claud C., private in Co. C, 9th Inf.; Wise, Johnny, professional baseball player; Wixson, Joe B.; Wolf, Don W., St. Louis, 1914; Wooler, Dick, West Indies, 1906; Wright, James Wm.; Young, Dale L., Washington, D. C., 1914; Zeh, Wm. Anton.

MISCELLANEOUS:—Any one who served in the 3rd Special Service Battalion, Royal Canadian Regt. of Inf., Co. D, Halifax, N. S., 1899-1900; O. K. Red *alias* Canadian Red; Any soldier, member of Nat'l Military Home, Dayton, O., 1909, 1910, 1911 until June 20, 1912; Jim Foster, Milwaukee, St. Paul; Moore Lafon, Louisville; Mylett, Manchester, N. H.; McLain, Butte; Pay Sgt. John Benham, all of 4 R. P. R's Transvaal; Red Maguire and McHenry, San Francisco, Cape Town; Ed Norton, New Orleans, Cape Town and Durban; Wild Bill Shea, Texas; Red O'Brien, Los Angeles; Daly, Providence, Beira, P. E. Africa; Whitey Sullivan, Boston, Philippines and Orange Free State; Comrades of 17 Field Artillery who served in Philippines; Studabaker, Davy; "Bonnie" Bowen; Van Ochs and "Venus" Philips; *Knights of the Big Stick:* Peterson, Wm. (Pete); Watson, Will; Ahl, Bill; English, "Jess"; Vose, Jack; Seay, Clif; Rooney, Bill; Fry, Joe; Baldwin, "Baldy"; Chapman; Kennedy; Molleter; Benner; McKinney; Tyson; Keinricks; Carlysle, Bill; Knode; Appleton; Wilkes; Butler; Davis; Vanlemberg; Jenkins; Rice; Bergin; Sullivan; Weinell; Armstrong; Shay; Shendel, and other knights of the "Big Stick" who worked for the W. E. Company in Bangor, Me., after the fire, April 30, 1911; Sands, Gen. Cliff or members of proposed expedition, Col. C. A. Morine, Tilden Butte Co., Cal.; W. E. Packard, W. E. Hammond, S. M. Clarck, R. F. Stoddard; W. Ekin Birch or J. M. Pilary; *Fritz K. Babson*, schooner; Any member of Troop A, 1st U. S. Cav., 1887-92; Sgt.-Major Brandt; Capt. Clark; 2nd Lieut. (Shorty) Ross, Racine, 1911-12; Any one who served in Troop L, 4th U. S. Cav. in Philippines, July, 1899-1901; Also James Greer, Wm. Bunch, Ed. A. Witmer, Chester C. Higgins of same troop; "Windy" Bache, "Ballyhoola," "Star Pointer" Brumby or any of the boys in Troop G, 5th U. S. Cav. at Aibonita, P. R., at time of hurricane in Aug., '99; Wm. Clare, Count Steurtzel, "Doc" Leach, A. S. O'Connor, Bob Ross, Jimmie Van Damme, Hans Kufeke, Jack Griffiths, Julian Harries and Jack Gardiner, once E and C Troops, B. S. A. P.; Jimmy Brew, Jess Howard, Little Mack and George Padgett, who were in Chihuahua, Mexico, 1907; Will F. Rampby, F. Balance or Harry Balance, "Spade Tail" Joe Bennett, George Ligars, "Chicken" Gardner or any of the bunch of the 18th U. S. Inf. on Panay Is., 1899-1900, also Sgt. Behi, 18th Inf.; Boer comrades of John Bussanich at Ladysmith and along Tugela, also John Murray, Tom Morrows, James McTigh, Jack Ryan; Percy M. Dubois, R. R. Plum, Joe Enscoe, Charles Carruthers, Lester Selig, Thos. L. Hogan, Andy Osbourne, once of *Evening Star;* Miss Winniefred Nelda, Francis Wilson and father of Mexican Central R. R. Co.; Frazier, John and Marion, Wm. Garrett, and Mr. Frazier, borax field of Calif.; Comrades, 30th and 4th U. S. Inf., 1867 to 1885, especially Co. I; Names and addresses comrades, Co. L, 1st Regt. Maryland Vol. Inf. during war with Spain; Corporal discharged Sept. 2, 1912, from Troop F, 13th Cav.; Orphan, Violet McMaster, adopted name, inquiring as to her identity; S. G. Hoffman and Claude Simmons; Comrades of Capt. F. E. Van Leue; Comrades of Percy Tressider; Comrades of "Lintic" O'Sea, "El Rayo"; Old shipmates British bark *Lyderhorn;* Capt. V. C. Nesbitt and other comrades of M. M. Marsden; Mrs. Wm. Ross, orphan inquiring about herself; Don; Comrades, Co. G, 41st Inf. and Capt. Graves' Co., 20th Inf.; Members of Stanley-Pryce & Masby's outfits in Lower Calif., 1910 and 1911, especially if a member of Troop A in battle of Tia Juana; Shipmates on Hamburg-American line, tramp *Sornia*, New York to Frontera, Mexico, June 2nd to 21st, 1913; A. J.; Comrades who served in 34th Inf., Co. B, in the Philippines, 1899; Veterinary surgeon, Indianapolis, Crowley, La.; Members of Madero's Foreign Legion, during 1911; Urita; Goff or Geof, last name unknown, navy men at China station; All members of Co. M, 1-2; Any one who worked J. F. Marshall's and John Bruggar's paper-box shops; Comrades, Co. G, 5th Inf. in Central and Western States; Members of K Co. of 18th Inf., 1900-02; Will, mail at Sydney; Any one 4th Texas Vol. Inf. in Spanish War; Friends of Capt. Jack Bonavita; Boys in Army, Navy or Marine Corps in the China Relief Expedition, 1900-1901; Heirs of Glen Brook; Comrades of *Culxean*, 1857-9, or gunboat *Bulldog*, also Troop K, 6th U. S. Cav., Apache campaigns 1881-6; Comrades in Co. E, 20th U. S. Inf., Troop E, 7th U. S. Cav.; J. L. F.; Hospital Corps, 23d U. S. Inf., 40th U. S. V.; Men with U. S. forces during the China Relief Expedition of 1900; Reckless, where are you?

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A steel-hearted Scotch sea-captain and his psalm-singing crew go after a German submarine.

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THE TRAIL OF THE MEAT *Samuel Alexander White*

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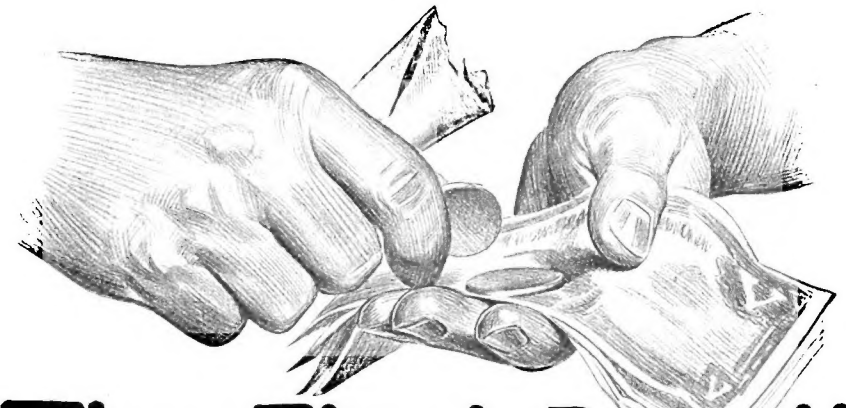

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